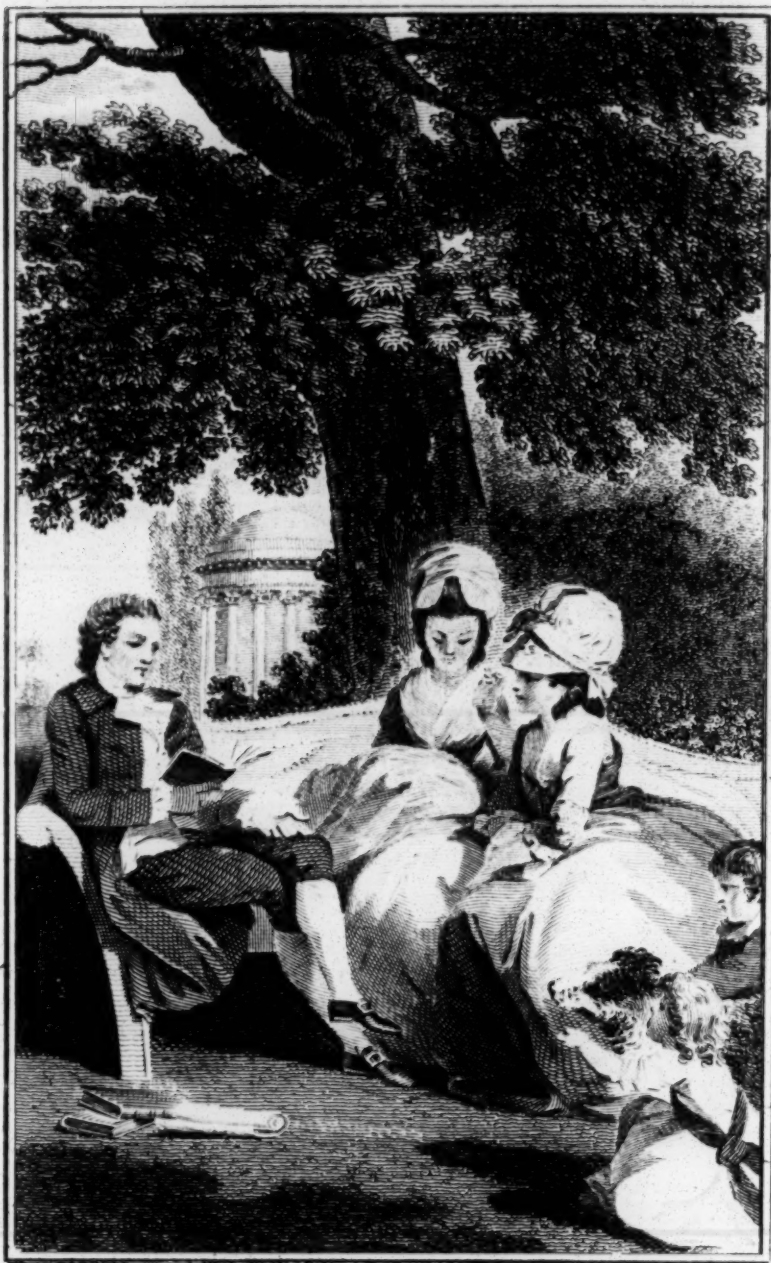


Frontispiece.

VOL. I.



Quid enim est dulcius Otio literato?

Quid Conjugio Natis charisque propinq.

Civ. Affor.

E S S A Y S
MORAL AND LITERARY.

BY
VICESIMUS KNOX, M.A.

THE SIXTH EDITION.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

V O L. I.

STUDIA ET MORES.

VIRG.

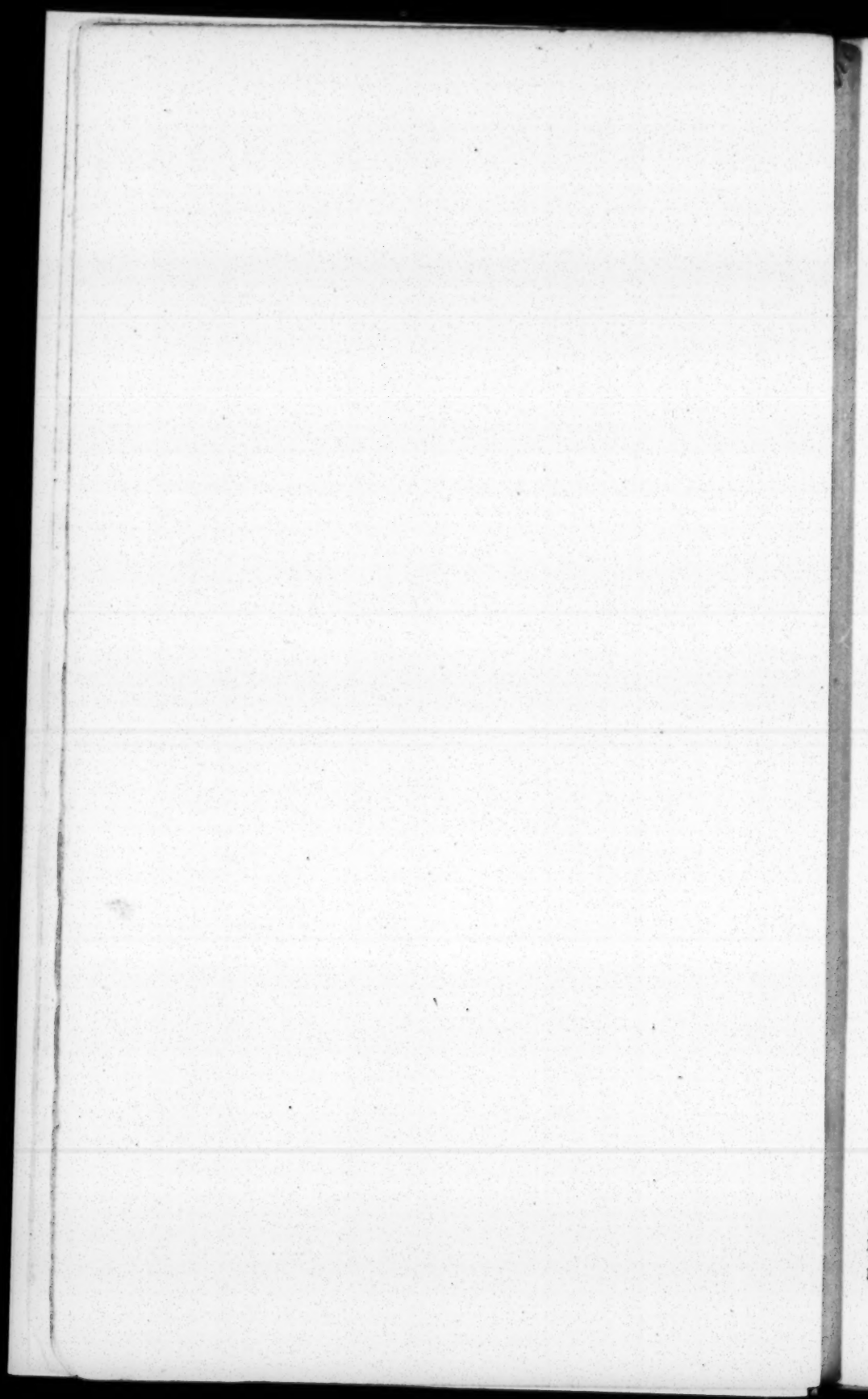


Richard d. L. T. 1785

OTII OBLECTATIONEM HANC HONESTISSIMAM ESSE
JUDICO. CIO.

L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR CHARLES DILLY, IN THE POULTNEY.
MDCCCLXXXV.



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TO THE

FOURTH EDITION.

EVERY Author, who entertains a due degree of reverence for the tribunal before which he is to appear, or who considers the importance of disseminating doctrines and opinions through various parts of the world, which may operate on the happiness of others when he is no more, will be anxious to correct his mistakes, and to improve his Compositions, whenever the public favour, calling for a new impression, affords him an opportunity for a revival. In the former editions this opportunity has been embraced; and who is there who must not say with Demea in Terence,

“Nunquam ita quisquam bene subductâ ratione ad vitam
fuit,

“Quin res, ætas, usus semper aliquid adportet novi.”

But it was found, that the former purchasers began to consider the great alterations as, in some degree, injurious; for which reason, very little alteration is made in this Edition. It is revised and corrected, and

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a word is occasionally changed, and a sentence added or rescinded. If the alterations had been continued, the book would have been like the celebrated ship, repaired so often, that not a single plank remained of the original fabric. It is now therefore dismissed with all its imperfections, and those who may be induced, by a love of letters, or of moral remarks, to become purchasers of it, need not fear lest this Edition should decrease, in whatever value it may possess, by subsequent additions, or by very material alterations.

It is thought expedient to inform the Reader, that the Frontispieces, &c. are merely ornamental or emblematic, and without any reference to particular persons or situations.

P R E F A C E

T O T H E

T H I R D E D I T I O N .

AS the present Edition differs greatly from the preceding, it may be necessary to give some account of the difference: and I hope the reader will indulge what may perhaps be called the Parental Fondness of an Author, while he briefly relates the history of his work.

MANY of the papers in the First Edition of the First Volume were written at College as voluntary exercises, for the sake of improvement. They had all of them an undoubted right to the epithet, juvenile. One or two of them were composed before the Writer had left his school, and most of them before he had taken his Bachelor's degree at the university. When they had accumulated to a number sufficient to make a volume, he deliberated whether he should commit them to the flames, or send them up to London as an adventure, without a name. Perhaps it was vanity, perhaps it was rashness, and perhaps a laudable motive, which determined him to transmit them as a gratuitous present to a Publisher. They were sent anonymously from Oxford to London, were published anonymously, nor did the Publisher know either the Writer's name or per-

P R E F A C E.

son during several months subsequent to the publication. Praise was, however, bestowed upon them from various and respectable quarters; and praise, operating like the warm sunshine on the ice, gradually relaxed his resolutions of concealment. It was not, however, without many fears and unaffected diffidence, that he consented to own a child of the brain which he had intended to expose and relinquish for ever, and that he at last prefixed his name to the Second Edition. He was tempted also to add a Second Volume; and is happy in the reflection, that he has yet had no cause to repent of his compliance with the natural allurements of applause. The good intentions which the book evidently displayed, tended to secure it from censure, and were perhaps the chief and best causes of its commendation.

It has been out of print more than once, and during a considerable time. In these intervals it has frequently been demanded, and many have been partial enough to express disappointment at not being able to procure it. Its Author, however, was unwilling to accelerate the editions, so as to exclude such additions and improvements as he had been able to insert, in the midst of a constant succession of other cares and daily labours. His respect and gratitude to his candid Readers, has induced him to take the opportunity of New Impressions, to render whatever little presents he has ventured to make them, less unworthy of acceptance.

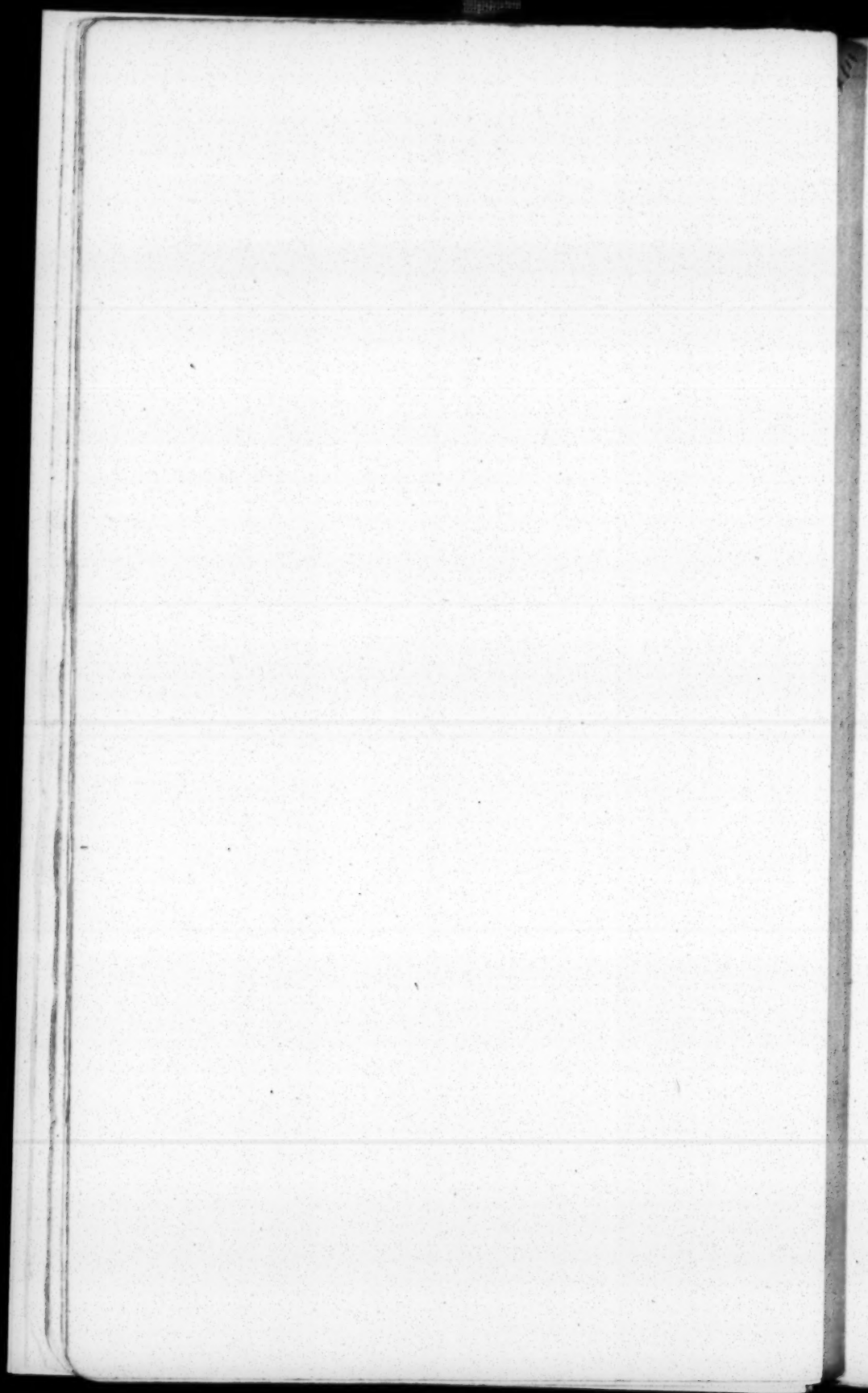
A LARGE number of new Papers is admitted in this Edition, and a few of the former excluded, to make room. As the arrangements of detached Papers is seldom of importance, it has been wholly changed, not indeed with the formality of a methodical plan, but fortuitously, and indeed just as the Papers happened to be revised and prepared.

He

P R E F A C E.

HE who resides at a distance from the metropolis and the press, will usually find it necessary to request the Reader to exercise his candour, as well as his sagacity, in the correction of typographical Errata. Notwithstanding great care has been taken, it is but too probable that many errors remain, both of this and of other kinds, which an attentive Reader will indeed observe, but a courteous Reader excuse.

IN the great variety of matter which these Volumes contain, it is almost impossible but that some opinions should be advanced, which many will be disposed to controvert. Men who are actuated by different hopes and fears, and whose minds have been tinged by different principles in religion or politics, by different studies, examples, and education, will often behold manners, books, and things, through such delusive mediums as represent the same object in a diversity of colour. But though the book may not be exempt from erroneous or disputable assertions, the Writer dismisses it with a full confidence, that the general tendency of it is to form honest men, to discountenance the pride of fashionable folly, to promote the love of truth and liberty, and to recommend whatever is useful and amiable in conduct and in conversation.



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E S S A Y S,
M O R A L, &c.

No. I. ON ESSAY WRITING.

THOSE Sages of antiquity, who, from their improvements in knowledge and virtue, had the least dubious claim to the appellation of wise men, were yet too modest to assume a name which had the appearance of ostentation, and rather chose to be called Philosophers, or Lovers of wisdom. From similar motives, many of the Moderns, who have written with great skill on subjects of morality and science, have entitled their productions, Essays; a name, which, though it may now convey the idea of regular treatises and dissertations, is synonymous with the word Attempts, and means no more than humble endeavours to instruct or to amuse. A writer who, at a late period, pursuing the track of those celebrated authors who preceded him, boldly promises improvement on his predecessors, is received with that indignation which arrogance, even when supported by some degree of merit, naturally excites; but he who professes only an attempt, however unsuccessful, has a claim to candour and indulgence. Failure has ceased to be ridiculous, where presumption has not made pretensions, nor confidence anticipated success.

Many works, therefore, distinguished by this unassuming title, have been well received, and have ob-

tained a very exalted place in the scale of literary honours. None have become more popular in their own country, than those periodical papers, which were published by the Tatler, the Guardian, and the Spectator, and which have been successively imitated by later writers. The taste and morals of the nation have been more generally improved by these excellent, though short and detached compositions, than by long and elaborate systems of morality. They were addressed to the heart and imagination, and fitted for the haunts of men engaged in the employments of common life; while scientific treatises of ethics were calculated only for the exercise of scholastic disputation; and their influence on the conduct of life, if they ever possessed any, was circumscribed within narrow limits. Addison, like Socrates, to whom he has often been compared, brought down knowledge from those heights which were accessible only to professed scholars, and placed it within the reach of all, who, to natural and common-sense, added the advantage of a common education. He it was who divested philosophy of that unbecoming garb in which she had been disguised by her mistaken followers, and represented her attired by the Graces, like the Goddess of Beauty.

The votaries of the severer muses have sometimes ventured to despise this entertaining species of productions, as futile and superficial. They have asserted that truth needs not embellishment, and that the ornaments which she borrows from imagination are no less unbecoming than unnecessary. But the real utility of literary labours is to be estimated by the extent of their influence on the national manners and understanding. Truth, however, when delivered with that systematic precision which is approved in the schools of philosophy, will not have charms enough to detain the common reader who takes up a book for the amusement of a leisure hour, and who must be tempted to admit instruction, by the prospect of receiving pleasure. In every thousand of those who have been delighted with the papers of Addison, perhaps not more than one has seen the Principia of Newton. Praises adequate to the merits of so exalted a genius, as was his who discovered

the true system of the universe, can scarcely be bestowed; nor is it detraction from his fame to assert, that since his theories require a painful attention to comprehend them, they will not generally be attended to, in a commercial country like our own, where only the short interval which the pursuit of gain, and the practice of mechanic arts affords, will be devoted to letters by the more numerous classes of the community. And indeed it must be confessed, that though the abstruse doctrines of philosophy may be highly interesting to the man of science, and may qualify him for a professor's chair, or a seat at the board of longitude, yet they seem not to have any tendency to render him better in his civil and social relations. I never could find that the Elements of Euclid taught any one to be a better father, husband, son, or citizen. Mathematical truth is indeed a most beautiful object of contemplation; but moral truth is better calculated to excite and reward the attention of the busy world.

The great Bacon, who pointed out the path to those sublime heights in philosophy, at which his followers have arrived, would never have brought his speculations home to men's business and bosoms, to use his own expressions, if he had not written his Essays; a work, which, as it was of the most extensive utility, and most easily understood, became, in his own country, the most popular of all his productions. The remarks contained in it are such as shew that he had an intimate knowledge of the human heart, and they have a tendency to direct mankind in the right conduct of life. They are the institutes of a science which all wish to learn; but how few, in comparison, are interested in the *Novum Organum*? Whether a man adopt the hypothetical or experimental philosophy, is a matter of indifference to his moral conduct; nor is a Cartesian of necessity better or worse than the admirer of the more modern and more probable system. An error in physical speculations, is seldom productive of such consequences either to one's neighbour or one's self, as are deeply injurious.

Bacon discovered new tracts of learning; he gave directions to pursue them; he banished hypothesis, and introduced experiment; he is deservedly the glory of

our nation, as the restorer of true philosophy; but yet, without detracting from his merits, we may express our regret that he did not bestow more time and pains on the grand science of human nature. He appears, from the specimens he has left us, to have been better qualified to advance it to perfection than any modern. The example, however, of so profound a writer, is sufficient to vindicate from the charge of futility, those little compositions, which, without the formality of studied treatises, aim at instructing the reader in the truths of ethics, of criticism, and in all the more agreeable subjects of popular philosophy.

In an age when books and a competent education are easily attainable, all ranks will be found to devote a considerable portion of their unemployed time to some kind of reading. But what shall they read during the interval of half an hour, interrupted perhaps by the prattle of children, or the impertinence of visitors, or the avocations of business? not a long and tedious treatise, divided and subdivided, and requiring at least the unsuspended attention of half a day, fully to comprehend the whole. They seek relaxation, but in this they find a task; irksome, because it requires close application; and unimproving, because their application can only be desultory. But hard indeed must be his lot, who, in the most active and most dissipated scenes of life, cannot bestow the small space of time required in the perusal of an Essay of a few pages. He who possesses such books as the *Religion of Nature Delineated*, will not easily find better guides, but yet he will oftener be tempted to take the *Spectator* from his shelves. He who has never thought of reading the tedious, though instructive, conferences of Arrian, has perhaps committed to memory the *Enchiridion* of Epictetus. Even the form, the size, the weight of the volume, are circumstances which deserve to be attended to in a subordinate degree, since they may contribute to render its influence more diffusive. Who could bear to carry a folio with him in his chariot, or recline on a sofa with a heavy quarto in his hand?

It must not, however, be supposed, that this kind of works is adapted only to the superficial reader. Many subjects

subjects of morality and learning have been concisely discussed in a few pages, with a depth, solidity, and originality of thought, rarely exceeded in any formal dissertation. The works of our English divines, the best moralists in the world, have sometimes lost their effect by their prolixity: for the mind of man, though comprehensive to a very great degree, is yet circumscribed within certain bounds, and, like a full vessel, suffers all that is superfluous to run to waste. But the periodical Essay satisfies the subject, without fatiguing the attention, or overburthening the memory.

The detached nature of these writings enables the writer to vary his style without impropriety; to be grave or gay, humorous or severe; to lay down positive rules, or to teach by example; to speak in his own person, or to introduce an instructive tale. Every volume contains a variety of subjects treated in various manners, and suited to the dispositions of different readers, or of the same reader at different times. Thus is idleness rendered attentive, and the listless moments of leisure improved with the advantages of study, unmingled with the toil of formal application. The saunterer is dec'ied into employment, and the vicious, the dissipated, the busy, are insensibly allured to the indulgence of literary and philosophical contemplation.

Thus extensively useful and entertaining, it is by no means wonderful, that Essays have been more universally read in the busy walks of life than any other productions. The names and works of Montaigne, of Bacon, of Temple, of Collier, of Addison, of Steele, and of their successful followers, are held in a degree of esteem, which neither the lapse of time nor the caprice of fashion have been able to annihilate.

There is scarcely an individual, not only of those who profess learning, but of those who devote any of their time to reading, who has not perused the Papers of the Spectator. Placed, however, in our hands in the earliest period of life, they have lost, in the eyes of many readers, the charm of novelty. To these perhaps new Attempts or Essays, similar at least in kind, may afford entertainment. Nor should they be checked as

presumptuous, since, without the spirit of adventure, modern literature would become either stationary or retrograde. The fame of those writers, however great, is but adequate to their merits; but though it is true that they have presented us with much fine gold, yet the mine is still rich, and will never be exhausted.

From the various combination of human passions, originally few in number, an infinite variety of moral appearances is found to arise. Political revolutions, religious reformatations, the whims of fashion, and the changes in literature, enable the moral writer, when he travels even in the beaten road of an Essayist, to discover prospects hitherto unobserved or not described.

The metropolis of a great empire, flourishing in arts and commerce, is, as it were, the hot-bed of manners, in which every plant shoots up with forced luxuriance. In a harvest so plentiful, not only those who first apply the sickle are rewarded with abundance, but many a loaded sheaf remains to be picked up by the careful gleaner. And happily for the morals and amusement, as well as understandings of our nation, the labourers have not been few nor unsuccessful.

The present age has been called an age of literary luxury; nor let it blush at the appellation. The passion for letters is attended with the sweetest satisfactions; and the indulgence of it tends to silence the importunity of many other passions, which, as they are less innocent, can seldom be gratified without consequent misery.

NO. II. ON ENTRANCE INTO LIFE, AND THE CONDUCT OF EARLY MANHOOD.

THERE seems to be a peculiar propriety in addressing moral precepts to the rising generation. Besides that, like travellers entering on a journey, they want direction, there are circumstances which render it probable,

probable, that instruction will be more efficacious in youth than at a maturer period. Long habits of business or pleasure, and an indiscriminate intercourse with mankind, often superinduce a great degree of insensibility; and the battered veteran at last considers the admonitions of the moralist as the vain babbling of a sophist, and the declamation of a school-boy. The keen edge of moral perception is blunted by long and reiterated collision. To him who has lost the finer sensibilities, it is no less fruitless to address a moral discourse, than to represent to the deaf, the charms of melody, or to the blind, the beauties of a picture.

But youth possesses sensibility in perfection; and unless education has been totally neglected, or erroneously pursued, its habits are usually virtuous. Furnished with a natural susceptibility, and free from any acquired impediment, the mind is then in the most favourable state for the admission of instruction, and for learning how to live.

I will then suppose a young man present who has passed through the forms of a liberal education at school, and who is just entering on the stage of life, to act his part according to his own judgment. I will address him with all the affection and sincerity of a parent, in the following manner:

“ You have violent passions implanted in you by
“ Nature for the accomplishment of her purposes.
“ But conclude not, as many have done to their
“ ruin, that because they are violent, they are irre-
“ sistible. The same Nature which gave you passions,
“ gave you also reason and a love of order. Religion,
“ added to the light of Nature and the experience of
“ mankind, has concurred in establishing it as an un-
“ questionable truth, that the irregular or intemperate
“ indulgence of the passions is always attended with
“ pain in some mode or other, which greatly exceeds
“ its pleasure.

“ Your passions will be easily restrained from enor-
“ mous excess, if you really wish and honestly endea-
“ vour to restrain them. But the greater part of young
“ men study to inflame their fury, and give them a
“ degree of force which they possess not in a state of na-

“ ture. They run into temptation, and desire not to
“ be delivered from evil. They knowingly and willingly
“ sacrifice to momentary gratifications, the comfort
“ of all which should sweeten the remainder of life.
“ Begin then with most sincerely wishing to conquer
“ those subtle and powerful enemies whom you carry
“ in your bosom. Pray for divine assistance. Avoid
“ solitude the first moment a loose thought insinuates
“ itself, and hasten to the company of those whom you
“ respect. Converse not on subjects which lead to
“ impure ideas. Have courage to decline reading
“ immoral books, even when they fall into your hands.
“ If, at a proper age, you form a strong attachment to a
“ virtuous woman, dare to marry. It is better to be
“ poor than wicked. Cherish the object of your early
“ love. Be industrious, and trust in Providence.

“ Thus shall you avoid the perpetual torments of
“ unuly affection, the most loathsome of diseases, and
“ the thousand penalties of selfish celibacy. Thus
“ shall you please God and your own heart, if it is a
“ good one; and displease none but an ill-judging and
“ wicked world, and perhaps a few of your covetous
“ relations.

“ But really you have not so much to fear from the
“ violence of the concupiscible affections, when unassisted
“ by voluntary compliance, as from vanity.
“ The perverse ambition of arriving at the character of
“ a man of spirit by vicious audacity, has of late universally
“ prevailed, and has ruined the greater part
“ of the British youth. I have known many young
“ men proud of the impurest of distempers, and boasting
“ of misfortunes which are attended with the
“ greatest pain and misery, and ought to be accompanied
“ with shame. Far more have taken pains to
“ shine, amidst the little circle of their vicious acquaintance,
“ in the character of gay libertines, than
“ to acquire, by useful qualities, the esteem of the good.
“ From motives of vanity, health and peace are sacrificed,
“ fortunes lavished without credit or enjoyment,
“ every relative and personal duty neglected, and religion
“ boldly set at defiance. To be admitted into the
“ company of those who disgrace the family title which
“ they

“ they inherit, thousands plunge into debauchery without passion, into drunkenness without convivial enjoyment, into gaming without the means or inclination for play. Old age rapidly advances. When vanity at length retreats from insult and from mortification, avarice succeeds; and meanness, and disease, and disgrace, and poverty, and discontent, and despair, diffuse clouds and darkness over the evening of life. Such is the lot of those who glory in their shame, and are ashamed of their glory.

“ Have sense and resolution enough, therefore, to give up all pretensions to those titles of a fine fellow; a rake, or whatever vulgar name the temporary cant of the vicious bestows on the distinguished libertine. Preserve your principles, and be steady in your conduct. And though your exemplary behaviour may bring upon you the insulting and ironical appellation of a Saint, a Puritan, or even a Methodist, *persevere*. It will be in your power soon, not indeed to insult, but to pity. Have spirit. Shew your spirit. But let it be that spirit which urges you to proceed against all opposition in the path in which you were placed by the faithful guide of your infancy and early youth. Display a noble superiority in daring to disregard the artful and malicious reproaches of the vain, who labour to make you a convert to folly, in order to keep them in countenance. They will laugh at first, but esteem you in their hearts, even while they laugh, and, in the end, revere your virtue.

“ Let that generous courage which conscious rectitude inspires, enable you to despise and neglect the assaults of ridicule. When all other modes of attack have failed, ridicule has succeeded. The bulwark of virtue, which has stood firmly against the weapons of argument, has tottered on its basis, or fallen to the ground, on the slightest touch of magic ridicule. In the college, in the army, in the world at large, it is the powerful engine which is used to level an exalted character. You will infallibly be attacked with it, if you are in any respects singular;

“ and singular in many respects you must be, if you
“ are eminently virtuous.

“ Love truth, and dare to speak it at all events.
“ The man of the world will tell you, you must dis-
“ semble; and so you must, if your objects and pur-
“ suits are as mean and as selfish as his. But your
“ purposes are generous; and your methods of obtain-
“ ing them are therefore undisguised. You mean well.
“ Avow your meaning, if honour requires the avowal,
“ and fear nothing. You will indeed do right to wish
“ to please; but you will only be anxious to please the
“ worthy; and none but worthy actions will effect that
“ purpose. With respect to that *art of pleasing* which
“ requires the sacrifice of your sincerity, despise it as
“ the base quality of flatterers, sycophants, cheats, and
“ scoundrels. An habitual liar, besides that he will
“ be known and marked with infamy, must possess a
“ poor and pusillanimous heart; for lying originates
“ in cowardice. It originates also in fraud; and a
“ liar, whatever may be his station, would certainly, if
“ he were sure of secrecy, be a thief. Sorry am I to
“ say, that this habit is very frequent in the world;
“ even among those who make a figure in the realms
“ of dissipation; among those, whose *honour* would
“ compel them to stab you to the heart, if you were to
“ tell them plainly the mortifying truth, that you
“ convict them of a lie.

“ With all your good qualities, unite the humility
“ of a Christian. Be not morose. Be cautious of over-
“ valuing yourself. Make allowances for the vices and
“ errors which you will daily see. Remember that all
“ have not had the benefit of moral instruction; that a
“ great part of mankind are in effect orphans turned
“ loose into the wide world, without one faithful friend
“ to give them advice; left to find their own way in a
“ dark and rugged wilderness, with snares, and quick-
“ sands, and chasms, around them. Be candid there-
“ fore, and among all the improvements of education
“ and refinements of manners, let the beautiful Chris-
“ tian graces of Meekness and Benevolence shine most
“ conspicuous. Wherever you can, relieve distress,

“ prevent

“ prevent mischief and do good ; but be neither ostentatious, nor censorious.

“ Be cheerful, and gratefully enjoy the good which Providence has bestowed upon you. But be moderate. Moderation is the law of enjoyment. All beyond is nominal pleasure and real pain.

“ I will not multiply my precepts. Chuse good books, and follow their direction. Adopt religious, virtuous, manly principles. Fix them deeply in your bosom, and let them go with you unloosened and unaltered to the grave.

“ If you follow such advice as, from the pure motive of serving you most essentially, I have given you, I will not indeed promise that you shall not be unfortunate, according to the common idea of the word ; but I will confidently assure you, that you shall not be unhappy. I will not promise you worldly success, but I will engage that you shall deserve it, and shall know how to bear its absence.”

NO. III. CLASSICAL LEARNING VINDICATED.

A FEW men of wit, who, in a long intercourse with the fashionable world, had probably forgotten that little knowledge of the ancient languages and authors which they had acquired at school, have endeavoured to bring into discredit the prevailing mode of education, which devotes so much time to the study of Grecian and Roman literature. Possessed of natural parts, they have, perhaps, besides, enjoyed all those advantages of good company and extensive commerce with the living world, which both excite, and give occasion to display, great abilities. They became, therefore, distinguished characters in their time, though their solid attainments were few, and greatly defective. But, whatever figure they made, they would have shone with still greater lustre, if they had retained a tincture of that elegance and liberality of sentiment which the mind acquires by a study of the classics, and which con-

tributes more to form the true Gentleman, than the substituted ornaments of modern affectation.

The example of these illustrious, but superficial personages, has induced every prater, who has been taught to lisp broken French, and dance a minuet, to laugh at the lubberly boy, as he calls him, who spends a dozen years at school, in learning Greek and Latin. He unfairly represents this time, as spent solely in acquiring the languages; ignorant that a taste is often formed in it for those authors, which may furnish the purest and the most elegant pleasures during the remainder of life.

The pert vivacity of assured ignorance has often persuaded the fond mother to discard the tutor for the dancing-master; to be more solicitous that he hopes of the family, the heir, perhaps, to a title, an estate, and even a share of legislation, should be taught to hold up his head, than be furnished with those ideas and principles, which would render him truly happy in himself, and an honour and advantage to his friends and to his country.

Even among those who are fully sensible of the necessity of improving the beauties of the mind, as well as the graces of the person, there prevails a predilection for modern languages and modern literature to the exclusion of the ancient. In the idea of these, a sufficient stock of historical knowledge is to be gained by an attention to the events of the two or three last centuries; and a sufficient acquaintance with philosophy and polite learning, from a perusal of the writers of France and Italy. Collections of letters and state-papers, and the epigrammatic narratives of the Historian of Ferney, are to supply the place of Herodotus, Thucydides and Livy. Ariosto, Tasso, and Boileau, are to be read in preference to Homer, Virgil, and Horace; and the works of Voltaire alone to be substituted in the place of all the poetry, all the philosophy, and all the history that has ever been written. In consequence of these mistaken notions, our great grammar-schools, which have produced so many ornaments of human nature, are exploded by many, as the seats of illiberal manners and of antiquated learning.

In

In answer to the charge that illiberal manners are the disgraceful characteristic of boys educated in grammar-schools, I must confess I am pleased with the natural simplicity of that age of sprightliness and inexperience; nor do I know a sight more truly ridiculous, than that of a boy of fourteen affecting the Graces, and behaving among his superiors in age and attainments, with all the disgusting ease of self-sufficiency. The same natural good sense which makes the boy act in character, will teach the man a manly behaviour. And I believe every judicious person had rather see his son, while very young, partaking in the noisy mirth of his school-fellows, than bowing and grinning in the insipid circle of a card-party.

With respect to the other charge, that a learned education is a little out of fashion in some polite circles, we confess and lament that it is true. But though we allow fashion to dictate without controul the exact dimensions of a buckle or a head-dress; yet a regard for the honour and happiness of human nature induces us to dispute her sovereign authority in those things on which depend the manners and sentiments of a rising generation.

If, however, it is granted, that the true gentleman, that is, the man of enlarged notions and polished taste, cannot, by any method of education, be so well formed, as by the classical; yet it by no means follows, that those whose happiness must, in a great measure depend on less comprehensive views of men and things, should be instructed in the same mode. The time that is usually spent in Lilly's Grammar, and in acquiring just so much knowledge of the Latin language as may inspire a young man with vanity, but which cannot enable him to enter into the spirit of an author, is certainly ill bestowed. He who is designed for a vulgar walk of life, had much better be reading Wingate's Arithmetic than Cordery's Colloquies, and learning the Rule of Three than the Syntax.

The mistakes of well-meaning ignorance are to be pitied and excused. But how shall we apologize for those who move in a higher sphere, and who cannot but know, that the greatest men our nation has produced, whether

whether greatness is estimated by power, wealth, title, knowledge, or virtue, have laid the foundation of their eminence in our grammar-schools, where little else was taught but classical learning? how shall we apologize for these, when they slight a mode of education which the experience of ages has proved to be efficacious, and adopt a new one, which, from its superficial nature, cannot form the man of dignity, or of just taste? Would a More, for instance, a Sidney, a Raleigh, a Milton, a Temple, and many others, have attained to that perfection of character, at which they aspired and arrived, if they had been educated in the superficial modes?

Some leading authors seem to have wished that all our literary inquiries should be limited to that period which they are pleased to distinguish by calling it the age of Lewis XIV. It is indeed a shining interval in the revolutions of time; but most of the great characters that appeared in it, were formed on the models of a better age, the age of Augustus, or of Pericles. And I know not, whether the glorious reign of our own Elizabeth might not exhibit examples of probity and learning, valour, and patriotism, fitter for the imitation of an Englishman, than those of any epoch in the annals of our rival nation.

While, however, we reprobate the idea of confining attention to the writings and transactions of the last three hundred years, it must be confessed that this period deserves regard. The inventions of the compass, of printing, of gunpowder, and a consequent spirit of enterprize, have rendered modern times peculiarly interesting. During this period, the French nation, to use their own idea, have been remarkably awakened; nor will any man of letters, with just pretensions to taste, rest satisfied, without reading the works of Fenelon, of Boileau, and of many others who have written in the true spirit of the ancients. He will, after all, acknowledge, that they are but imitations of those originals, which are no less open to us than they were to them; and will confess it to be a want of spirit, to drink at the distant stream, when we have access to the fountain. If we can be contented with Imitations, we have excellent ones in the works of Pope and Addison.

But what sculptor would be satisfied with examining the plaster bust, who was at liberty to walk in the Florentine gallery?

There is certainly something in the character of an Englishman analogous to the disposition of an old Roman. He has a natural generosity, and love of independence. He has also a gravity of temper, better adapted to mental and moral improvement than any other; because more capable of fixed attention. French vivacity is foreign to his nature; fashion, indeed, makes him sometimes adopt it, but it sits awkwardly on him, lessens his inward consciousness of dignity, and lowers him no less in the estimation of others. The ideas of a Roman are congenial to him. His mind, when cultivated by classical instruction, shoots up to maturity with the vigour of an indigenous plant, but thrives slowly, like the exotic, when nurtured only by the slender supplies of a foreign and superficial education.

The polish of external grace may indeed be deferred till the approach of manhood. When solidity is obtained by pursuing the modes prescribed by our forefathers, then may the file be used. The firm substance will bear attrition, and the lustre then acquired will be durable. A sensible father, who is not himself a convert to the effeminacy of the times, had rather see a son forming himself as a scholar and a man, on the example of an old Roman or Athenian, than imitating, in his writings and actions, the undignified vivacity of nations which have been taught by their philosophy to degrade human nature.

Surely, no one will deny that the two principal objects in a well-conducted education, are to cultivate a good heart, and to give the understanding such additional strength and information as may safely direct the heart in the various events of life, and teach the possessor of it to act up to the comparative dignity of a rational creature. But attainments merely ornamental have little tendency to accomplish either of these purposes. On the contrary, as they add a lustre without solidity, they induce idleness to content itself with the appearances of merit, which are easily assumed, and to neglect the reality, as attainable only by a painful and unostentatious

tatious application. They inspire confidence without worth to support it; they give an air of insolent superiority which often defeats even the purpose of pleasing; and however they may cause admiration in the dissipated and superficial, they are little esteemed by those whose applause is valuable, men of approved virtue and dispassionate reflection. They are then only useful and truly graceful when they tend to render good characters more conspicuously amiable.

NO. IV. ON THE WISDOM OF AIMING AT PERFECTION.

THE infirmity of human nature is a topic on which the profligate love to enlarge. They are apt to deduce an argument from it no less injurious than fallacious. They infer from the concession that man is naturally weak and corrupt, that the precepts of strict morality are utterly useless, and that they originate in one of the principal arguments of human imbecility, an ill-grounded pride.

Man is indeed a weak creature; but he is also an improveable creature. He has strong passions; but he has also strong powers within him to counteract their operation. He possesses reason; and his happiness certainly depends upon the voluntary use or abuse, the neglect or the exertion, of this noble faculty.

It seems probable, that they who urge the inefficacy of philosophical and moral precepts, are only endeavouring to excuse their own indolence. They who feel themselves little inclined to correct their misconduct, are very solicitous to persuade themselves that they are unable.

Indeed, wherever human creatures are found, there also are to be found vice and misery. Nor is this appearance only among the rude and the illiterate, but among those who are adorned with all the arts of human knowledge. Observation affords many examples of those

those, who, after having recommended virtue in the most forcible manner, with all the appearance of sincerity, have at last fallen into the disgrace and wretchedness of singular profligacy. Contrary to their conviction, their interest, their character, to all that seemed estimable in their own eyes, they have descended from the towering heights of virtue into the abysses of vice.

Such instances do indeed often occur, and they are usually blazoned and exaggerated by triumphant delinquency. In many cases of degeneracy, it is probable that the appearances of virtue were insincere. But allowing, what indeed the uniform decisions of observation, reason, and religion, clearly declare, that human nature is weak in the extreme; yet I would draw a different conclusion from that which is deduced by the patrons of libertinism.

The nature of man is extremely infirm; therefore I argue, let every effort be made to acquire strength. It cannot be said that the endeavour must of necessity be abortive; it cannot be said that we have not natural incitements sufficient to encourage a vigorous attempt. We have nice sensibilities of moral rectitude, we have a natural love of excellence, we have intellectual powers capable of infinite improvement, we have precepts innumerable, and, to the honour of human nature, let it be added, that examples also greatly abound.

Many individuals, who inrolled themselves among the severer sects of ancient philosophy, have exhibited most animating proofs of the strength of human nature. It is not to be supposed that they possessed faculties more in number, or more perfect in their kind, than the present race. But they loved excellence, and they believed that they were capable of it. That belief operated most favourably on their exertion. They succeeded in their attempts, and stand forth among mankind like colossal statues amid a collection of images less than the life.

I hope therefore it will be rendering an effectual service to mankind, if I can revive this belief among the gay and the dissipated. Philosophers have already received it; but philosophers are to the rest of mankind
what

what a drop of water is to an ocean. The pretended philosophers are numerous indeed; but they commonly divulge opinions which tend to degrade and vilify human nature. Popularity seems to be more their object than the sublime satisfaction of discovering and communicating useful truth. But were the generality of mankind convinced that they are capable of arriving at high degrees of excellence, and consequently led to aspire at it, moral evil would certainly decrease, and society would assume a fairer appearance. Much misery and much evil of all kinds will always be in it, during this sublunary state; but that share of it which is obstinately and presumptuously occasioned by our own folly, may certainly be removed by the correction of that folly.

What is done in the works of art may be effected in morals. Were a musical instrument to be placed in the hands of a peasant who had never heard or seen one, and were he told that he might, if he were to attend to it, call forth sounds from it which would delight every hearer, he would not be induced by any argument to believe the possibility of it. Yet let him regularly learn and practise a due time, and he will arrive at a degree of skill, which, though far from perfection, will appear miraculous on comparison with his original inability. So in life, if you inform your disciple that he is able to reach a great degree of excellence, and urge him to the attempt, he will infallibly make great advances, and improve to his own astonishment. But indulge his natural indolence, timidity, or despair, by expatiating on the irremediable weakness of human nature, and you effectually preclude even his endeavours, and add to his natural imbecility.

In the works of art, in sculpture, and in painting, in the subordinate operations of mechanical ingenuity, to what perfection does the hand of man attain? When a savage sees a watch, he adores it as a God. No earnestness of assertion would convince him that it was the work of a creature in all respects like himself, except in acquired dexterity. And can man improve himself so highly in the manual arts, in science, and in the productions of taste, and be unable to arrive at real and

solid improvement in the finest art and the noblest science, the art and the science of conducting life? Half the attention and the constancy which is displayed in acquiring skill in an occupation by which money is to be gained, if bestowed on the melioration of the morals, would usually produce a most laudable character.

The state of things is so constituted, that labour, well bestowed and properly directed, always produces a valuable effect. Away then with the philosophy which increases the weakness of our nature, by representing it as insuperable. Our personal excellence and happiness, our friends and our country, are greatly interested in exploding the pusillanimous doctrine. We shall indeed often fall; but let us rise undejected. Our failings will be great, but great also may be our virtues. At least, according to an old and just observation, by aiming at absolute perfection, we shall approach it much more nearly than if we sat down inactive through despair.

The modern philosophers and their disciples, while they assert the inefficacy of philosophy, of moral precepts, of religious influence, are inclined to maintain, that the effect which these only pretend to produce, may be actually produced by *modern honour*. I would only, in reply to their insinuation, ask them these questions: Who are the persons who openly and proudly commit deeds at which the child of nature, even the savage, would shudder; who is guilty of the meanest, cruellest seduction; who wears a sword ready to plunge it into the heart of his dearest friend for a trifling provocation; who is ready to glory in breaking the peace of conjugal life, and ruining a family for the gratification of lust or vanity? Unerring experience replies, Men of Honour; all, all honourable men.

From such delusion let the untainted mind of youth hasten to escape. To religion and morality let it fly for solid comfort, and for those assistances which can alone repair the ruins that have been made by the fall of Adam in the glorious fabric of human nature. With our utmost endeavours, both reason and divinity inform us we shall be at last greatly defective. Whither then shall we fly

fly for succour? whither shall we turn to find that which shall support our weakness, and supply our defects? Philosophy is often vain, but religion never. To the Deity we must have recourse, who will certainly strengthen us by his grace, and pardon our involuntary failures, of his infinite mercy.

No. V. ON THE FEAR OF APPEARING
SINGULAR.

FEW among mankind are able, and perhaps fewer are willing, to take the trouble of preserving with consistency a system of principles purely of their own selection. They separate themselves into large divisions, which, like the flock conducted by the sheep and bell, implicitly tread in the footsteps of some distinguished leader. Thus is the pain of consulting the judgment in every emergency easily avoided. The road becomes a beaten and a wide one, and each individual knows where to step, only by seeing the vestige of his predecessor.

But if the chosen leader is a treacherous or injudicious guide, the followers must inevitably be led into evil. Now it unfortunately happens, that the leaders, who are the most likely to attract the more numerous herds, are the least likely to possess the more valuable qualities. For what is it which chiefly attracts popular notice? Vanity and effrontery. But these qualities imply dispositions obviously inconsistent with a leminent and solid virtue; though always united with shewy, superficial, and deceitful ornaments. Thus happens, that the fashionable modes of thinking and living, whatever modes in the vicissitudes of human affairs assume that name, will seldom bear the test of inquiry, without discovering that they are futile and culpable. For who, indeed, was the great legislator who established them? Some rich man, or some titled

lady
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lady, distinguished for boldness, but not for excellence ; vain, presumptuous, and dictatorial, though qualified neither by nature, parts, nor education, to prescribe to others, and elevated to empire by a concurrence of favourable contingencies with their own aspiring efforts. Once seated on the throne, their edicts are arbitrary and irresistible. With the authority of their signature, there is no deformity which will not assume the appearance of beauty, no vice which will not appear with all the confidence which naturally belongs to virtue, but which the delicacy of virtue is too apt to conceal.

The subjects of these self-erected tyrants are most truly slaves, though voluntary slaves ; but as slavery of any kind is unfavourable to human happiness and improvement, I will venture to offer a few suggestions, which may induce the subjugated tribes to revolt, and claim their invaluable birthright, their natural liberty.

To select a model for imitation is one of the best methods of facilitating the acquisition of any excellence. A living model not only shews what is to be done, but how. The imitation must not however be servile. A servile imitation is that which obeys the dictates of the master without venturing to inquire into the reason of it. The servile imitator paces in the same round, like the mill-horse, whose eyes are hoodwinked, that he may not be allured by intervening objects to deviate from the tedious circle into a path of his own selection.

It may not be improper to premise, that to one individual his own natural rights and possessions, of whatever kind, are as valuable as those of another are to that other. It is his own happiness which is concerned in his choice of principles and conduct. By these he is to stand, or by these to fall.

In making this important choice, then, let the sense of its importance lead him to assert the rights of man. These rights will justify him in acting and thinking, as far as the laws of that community, whose protection he seeks, can allow, according to the suggestions of his own judgment. He will do right to avoid adopting any system of principles, or following any pattern of conduct, which his judgment has not pronounced conducive to his happiness, and consistent with his duties ;

consistent

consistent with those duties which he owes to his God, to his neighbour, to himself, and to his society. Though the small circle with whom he is personally connected may think and act differently, and may even despise and ridicule his singularity, yet let him persevere. His duty, his freedom, his conscience, and his happiness, must appear to every thinking man, superior to all considerations.

Men act wrong scarcely less often from the defect of courage, than of knowledge and of prudence. Dare to be wise, said an ancient; in order to which, it will first be necessary to dare to be singular. But in this and every other effort of virtue, it must not be extended beyond the golden mean. The singularity which I recommend will be as distant from moroseness and misanthropy, and from *ridiculous oddity*, as it will from an unmanly and pernicious submission to those who possess no reasonable right to take the lead.

If the immoderate fear of appearing singular is injurious to health, to fortune, to peace of mind, and to rational enjoyment, as perhaps on a farther consideration it will appear to be, I shall contribute something to promote happiness, by daring to be so singular as to recommend singularity.

Of the many young men who impair their constitutions by early excess and debauchery, a great part is instigated to irregularity by other motives than the impulses of passion. A young man just introduced into the company of his equals, entertains a natural and a laudable desire to recommend himself to their favour. If they indulge in wine to excess, or in any other intemperance, he must do so likewise; for he cannot bear to be singular; and has, besides, received among his prudential rules, that he is to do as the rest do, wherever he may be fixed; and who indeed will dare to disobey the precept which commands us, While we are at Rome, to do as they do at Rome? Thus is the favour of our temporary companions gained; but our health, which was designed to endure, and with proper management would have endured, till the regular decays of nature, is greatly injured, or totally destroyed. I will then venture to exhort the young man, not to dread the
imputation

imputation of singularity so much, as to endanger the loss of that which can seldom be completely regained, and without which no favour, no applause, no popularity, can give to life its natural sweetness.

With respect to that ruin which consists in the loss of fortune and the accumulation of debt, it is daily effected by the fear of singularity. However their finances may have declined, they who are whirled in the vortex of fashion, cannot retrench. They must act as their equals act; they must, like others, dress, keep a table, an equipage, and resort to public diversions. It is *necessary*, according to their ideas; and they tacitly acknowledge the obligation to be much greater than that of the moral duties. For who could bear to be *odd* people, to descend among the tribes of those whom no body knows, and who indeed are distinguished only for the plain qualities of probity and decency? Indulgencies and extravagancies are thus allowed, not altogether for the pleasure they afford, but often from the horror of singularity. It is to be wished, that the horror of a bankruptcy, a gaol, an elopement, or a pistol, possessed even half the influence.

In destroying health and fortune, it certainly destroys that peace of mind, without which all external advantages whatever are but like music and painting, banquets and perfumes, to him who has lost all powers of perception. But supposing health and fortune to be preserved, yet the fear of singularity will lead to omissions and commissions which will one day hurt a conscience not entirely insensible. Religion and duty enjoin many things which are real solecisms and downright barbarisms in the school of fashion.

When health, fortune, and peace, are gone, it may be justly said, no arguments are necessary to prove that there can be no enjoyment. But supposing them not entirely renounced, and that room were left for some degree of happiness, even that little would be greatly lessened by a too scrupulous fear of deviating from the arbitrary standard of a fantastic mode. The tastes, fancies, inclinations of other men, cannot please us like the genuine choice of our native feelings, directed by our own judgment. They may indeed be adopted, and even

even loved; but an adopted child seldom excites and soothes our sensibilities in a degree equal to that which is caused by our own.

Upon the whole, I cannot help thinking, that however Pride may vaunt herself, and Fashion may assume airs of superior wisdom in her choice, it is singularly foolish, absurd, and wicked, to decline any practices and any habits, however unusual, which evidently tend to render a man singularly learned, singularly good, and singularly happy.

NO. VI. ON THE INJUSTICE AND CRUELTY OF THE PUBLIC PAPERS.

A FREE country is that in which not only the life and the property of every individual, but his reputation also, which is often dearer to him than both, is secured by efficient laws. That country is not the land of perfect liberty, however it may arrogate the name in which the character of every member may be traded at pleasure in the most public manner, without redress, and without the possibility of an adequate exculpation. Oppression of the people may proceed from a part of the people, as well as from the throne. The liberty of the press is pregnant with advantages; but the licentiousness of it teems with evils which almost counterbalance them. It is true, that the liberty of the press is essential to civil liberty. But why do we estimate the enjoyment of civil liberty as one of the greatest of human blessings? Confessedly because it allows the natural and reasonable possession of all the rights and privileges of man, in his individual and connected state because it secures to him the enjoyment of all which God, and reason, and nature, and his relative situation have taught him to hold dear. That kind and degree therefore, of liberty which cannot be secured without endangering all these, certainly frustrates the primary

purpose of a free constitution. Liberty, under such circumstances, operates on human happiness with all the malignant influence of real despotism.

Our own country is constitutionally the freest on the face of the globe. If there is any oppression in it, it proceeds from the people, and operates on themselves. And there is a species of oppression peculiarly cruel and unjust, as it often falls heaviest on the good, the peaceable, and the inoffensive.

It is true indeed, that, in this free country, we have laws for the punishment of defamation; but nothing is more easy than to evade them. They sometimes prevent an open attack; but they cannot preclude those various and indirect methods of disseminating calumny, which ingenuity, stimulated by malice, or the hope of gain, can easily invent.

The laws of the Twelve Tables made defamation a capital crime. The punishment was rigorous. It appeared so in the age of Augustus, and was changed to corporal chastisement. It was again rendered capital in the reign of Valentinian; and the severity with which so wise a people as the Romans have treated this crime, from the earliest to the latest period of the empire, evidently shews how deep a sense they entertained of its malignant influence on the happiness of society.

Our laws are indeed less severe. We are justly jealous of our liberty. I will not suggest an idea which can tend to the infringement of that liberty. I am grateful to Providence for having placed me in a country where it so gloriously prevails. There is no sacrifice, consistent with innocence, which a good man would not make, to hand down the blessings derived from his fathers, undiminished to his children. What I now say, tends most effectually to preserve them inviolate: for, to express my ideas in the words of the learned Blackstone, *to censure the licentiousness, is to maintain the liberty of the press.*

Let, therefore, the laws remain unaltered, if the alteration is attended with danger. I will only appeal to the hearts, the manners, and the understandings of my readers, for the voluntary reformation which I would effect; a reformation to be begun and completed by themselves,

themselves, and which, instead of impairing civil liberty, will enlarge it, and will render it a diffusive good, almost unalloyed with evil: a rare condition of human felicity!

With respect to the writers and the publishers of calumny, they have usually but one or two objects in view; either the gratification of malice, or the earning of a morsel of bread. But hunger and passion are powerful incitements. The whispers of reason, and justice, and humanity, will scarcely be heard amidst the clamours of assailants so importunate. From them, therefore, we seek not redress by expostulation. We apply to the liberal sentiments of a people truly free, who value their freedom, and who possess sense enough to take the most effectual methods for its security. They will renounce the poor pleasure which they receive from the gratification of an improper curiosity, when they find that it cannot be gratified without rendering the liberty of the press a source of misery to the innocent; when they find that the people's licentiousness more effectually saps the foundation of liberty, than the ambition of a king.

Let us turn our attention to the origin and progress of that species of publication, which, within a few years, has become a general cause of complaint among all the moderate and the well-principled. In order to gain notice a news-paper must not at first be moderate, but must abound in *abuse, and in anecdote*. A letter-box is fixed to the window of some of the most public streets in the metropolis. Into this receptacle every dark assassin tacitly invited to throw his poisoned dose. No man is so virtuous as not to have failings. No man is so inconsiderable as not to have enemies. Here then is an opportunity of exposing those secrets, which perhaps the confidence of a friend has made known to the treacherous divulger of them, and of gratifying the malice of a coward with safety, and by the infliction of the cruellest injury; that malice which was perhaps excited only by a superior degree of excellence. And who is to sit in judgment on what is received? Those who are often attentive to their interest alone. The papers are submitted to the consideration of some dark conclave

and if it seems good to the invisible agents who sit in it, the tale of infamy, the oblique insinuation, the whisper of suspicion, the invention of the wanton, the belief of the credulous, the virulence of revenge, private pique, and public resentment, are in a few hours scattered over the empire.

In this manner the public erects a despot over themselves. One of their own order, and sometimes one of the obscurest persons in it, institutes a tribunal, where sentence is pronounced on all, frequently without due examination, and with little regard either to justice or to mercy. No other limits are assigned to the severe decree, which is issued out to brand with infamy the best of characters, than those which are necessary to escape the letter of the law, and elude the possibility of a successful prosecution. So unmanly and so cruel are the decisions of this arbitrary tribunal, that even female innocence is often punished with its severest sentences. Virgin purity and conjugal virtue are blackened with aspersions which can scarcely ever be wiped off. Wounds are inflicted on the parent's heart which no time can heal: for one great misfortune attending this mode of scandal is, that though all are ready to listen to the calumny, few have candour and patience to hear and admit the vindication. Many see the attack, who never see the defence. Even if the vindication were as generally received as the abuse, it is a cruel necessity to be forced reluctantly forward on the public eye, to be obliged to answer severe and groundless charges, brought by those who have no right, either by the laws of God or of man, to disseminate throughout the world an unprovoked accusation. Can that government be well regulated where a mechanic is able to erect himself into an oppressive tyrant, to wound the heart of the innocent, break the peace of families, blacken the brightest characters, detract from the most allowed merit, degrade and lower every rank and dignity; and all this, not only with impunity, but with such rewards from the public, as enable him to amass an independent fortune, and laugh over the ruins on which he has erected his prosperity.

Many among us are heard to complain of the incroachments of government on the liberty of the subject, and of

the oppressions of an administration. I ask every individual in the British empire, Whether he ever experienced a single act of oppression from the crown, of the minister of the crown, equal to that which is daily and hourly inflicted, in the most arbitrary manner, by an Editor of a licentious public paper? The severe punishments of the law cannot be inflicted by any power known to our constitution without a formal process, even on those who deserve them. But the operations of this engine of oppression, in the hands of an interested plebeian, unappointed, unauthorized, and unoffended, inflict the severest penalty without judge, jury, witnesses, conscience, or humanity.

The man who is guilty of this violation of every social law, shall in the mean time think himself, and be thought by others, an honest man, and even a patriot; shall rise in plenty amidst friends and riches; while he who takes from me my purse, and the trash which it contains, perishes by the halter. All this is tolerated by a sensible and an humane people, because, by the abuse of language the licentiousness of the press is called its liberty.

I will not enlarge on the diabolical malignity of party and political abuse, which flows through these dirty channels. Malignant as it is in its nature and origin, it is in this age too much despised to effect much mischief. It as naturally pursues a minister or a successful party, as shadow the substance. If we take but a cursory view of past times, we shall see that many who are now justly considered as models of virtue and of political wisdom were in their day aspersed with all the venom which a virulent party could expectorate upon them. On the hearts and mean minds, the lucrative advantages of high offices in the state will always have an influence irresistibly alluring. They will never rest at ease without participation of them; but will engage some poor dependent printer to admit their poisonous writings into his paper, in hopes of supplanting others to make room for themselves. The poor printer considers his fortune made when patronized by lords and dukes, and stands ready to calumniate the best men, or to speak treason for the confidential smile of a wretched and disappointed an envious and an ill-natured peer; perhaps of a villain who would betray his country, because he cannot pro-

cure a lucrative place in the administration of its government.

I will not now expatiate on the wickedness of evil-speaking, a topic which has been admirably treated by the divines of England. If any reader can want to be informed how inconsistent it is with the spirit of Christianity, and how pregnant with moral and social evil of every kind, I will refer him to all the most celebrated composers of sermons in the English language. But, alas! they who delight in scandal possess dispositions not to be delighted or reformed by a sermon.

In the mean time, I will content myself with entreating readers of the better sort, the humane, and the well-educated of the higher ranks (with whom I hope to prevail), to set a noble example, by refusing to give encouragement to those prints which are notorious for personal abuse and the publication of family secrets. It is but just to say, that there are some respectable conductors of the newspapers who exclude, as far as human vigilance can exclude, all that is injurious.

For their own sakes, the Public should not encourage pamphlets and papers which deal in the bitterness of scandal. Their own hearts and happiness will be injured by the perusal of them, and they cannot know how soon it may be their turn to suffer by the malignity which they are so ready to enjoy.

It is indeed a melancholy truth, that the love of calumny, and the curiosity to be acquainted with the private affairs of all distinguished characters, is become so general, that a work scarcely wants any other recommendation, if it professes *personality and anecdote*. The prevalence of this cruel taste precludes the relish of innocent and ingenious works on general topics. It will also infallibly habituate the mind to delight in cruelty and malice: for, as the feeling Goldsmith says, "like the tyger that seldom desists from pursuing man after having once preyed upon human flesh, the reader, who has once gratified his appetite with calumny, makes ever after the most agreeable feast on murdered reputation."

No. VII. ON FORMING A TASTE FOR SIMPLE PLEASURES.

TO argue against pleasure in general, is absurd. It is the law of nature, that every animal should prefer the agreeable sensations to the disagreeable. But it is incumbent on the moralist to explode those pleasures, which, though they are transient and unsatisfactory in themselves, are yet found to occasion permanent pain and real injury.

Perhaps the most effectual mode of accomplishing this purpose, is not to arraign pleasure in general, but to substitute other pleasures in the place of those which are hurtful. Man must be amused and delighted; and pernicious amusements and poisoned delights will be pursued, if others cease to be obvious.

It is certain that nature has interspersed a great number of objects capable of affording the liveliest delight, without danger of future pain, and even with the probability of deriving improvement and additional pleasure by reflecting on the past enjoyment. Such, indeed, are those innocent pleasures which we follow in early youth with cheerful ardour, and which we enjoy with sincere delight, before we are vitiated and hardened by a long intercourse with a depraved world; before the qualities of the lamb and the dove are exchanged for the less amiable wisdom of the wolf and the serpent.

Amidst all the improvements which we make in a state of high civilization, we lose some natural tastes and propensities which were favourable to virtue. We acquire wants and notions which disturb our repose, and cause a feverish anxiety, ever thirsting, and never satisfied.

The simple and innocent satisfactions of nature are usually within reach; and as they excite no violent perturbation in the pursuit, so are they enjoyed without tumult, and relinquished without long or painful regret. It will then render essential service both to hap-

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pinefs and morality, if we can persuade men in general to taste and to form an habitual attachment to the genuine satisfactions of uncorrupted nature.

One of the first affections which the heart perceives, is filial piety. As years increase, this affection dilates, and extends itself to brothers and sisters, relatives and domestics. The child loves and is beloved by all around him. Amidst the conversation, the events, the endearments and tender duties of a family, he finds full play for all his faculties and propensities, and is often, by his own subsequent confession, happier at this early age than in any period which succeeds.

I say then, that, were a taste for this simple pleasure retained, were men at a mature age led to seek their happiness in domestic life, and in the exercise of the mild virtues of family offices, their enjoyments, though less brilliant and noisy, would be purer, and more substantial. But, on the contrary, we see them no sooner arrived at maturity, than they eagerly leave the nest, and wander, in search of an untried and an imaginary bliss, through all the wilds of dissipation. In the precipitate pursuit, innocence is often lost; and whatever progress is made in refinement, little is added to solid happiness. Our interest, as we falsely call it, and our honour, become the idols whom we devoutly worship, and on whose altars we sacrifice health, truth, peace, and liberty.

We are indeed so deeply engaged in our objects, that we cannot advert to the beauties of nature, those fertile sources of unadulterated pleasure. The young mind is always delighted with rural scenery. The earliest poetry was pastoral, and every juvenile poet of the present day delights to indulge in the luxuriance of a rural description. A taste for these pleasures will render the morning walk at least as delightful as the evening ridotto. The various forms which nature assumes in the vicissitudes of the seasons, will constitute a source of complacency which can never be exhausted. How grateful to the senses the freshness of the herbage, the fragrancy of the flowers, all those simple delights of the field, which the poets have, from the earliest ages, no less justly than exuberantly described! "It is all mere fiction," exclaims the

man of the world, "the painting of a visionary poet." He feels not, he cannot feel their truth. He sees no charms in herbs and blossoms; the melody of the grove is no music to his ear; and this happens, because he has lost, by his own fault, those tender sensibilities which nature had bestowed. They are still daily perceived in all their perfection by the ingenuous and innocent, and they have been most truly described by feeling poets, as contributing to pure, real, and very exalted delight.

Yet the possessor of extensive lands, if he is a man of fashion and spirit, forsakes the sweet scenes of rural nature, and shuts himself up in a coffee-house, at a gaming-table, in a fetid assembly; and leaves that liberal air, which breathes over his lawns, and agitates his forests, to be inhaled by his menial rustics. He perverts the designs of nature, and despises the hereditary blessings of Providence; and he receives the adequate punishment in a restless life, perpetually seeking and never finding satisfaction. But the employments of agriculture, independently of their profit, are most congenial and pleasing to human nature. An uncorrupted mind sees, in the progress of vegetation, and in the manners and excellencies of those animals which are destined to our immediate service, such charms and beauties as art can seldom produce. Husbandry may be superintended by an elegant mind, nor is it by any means necessary that they who engage in it should contract a coarseness of manners or a vulgarity of sentiment. It is most favourable to health, to plenty, to repose, and to innocence; and great indeed must be the objects which justify a reasonable creature in relinquishing these. Are plays, are balls, are nocturnal assemblies of whatever denomination, are debaucheries in all their modifications, which tend to rob us of sleep, to lessen our patrimony, to injure our health, to render us selfish, vicious, thoughtless, and useless, equivalent to these? Reason replies in the negative; yet the almost universal departure from innocence and simplicity, will lead the affirmative established by a corrupt majority.

It is not without a sigh, that a thinking man can pass by a lordly mansion, the sweet retreat deserted by its
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falsely-refined possessor, who is stupidly carousing in some tavern of a polluted city. When he sees the chimney without smoke in the venerable house, where all the country was once welcomed to partake of princely hospitality, he cannot help lamenting that progress of refinement, which, in rendering the descendants of the great fine gentlemen, has left them something less than men, through the defect of manly virtues.

The superintendence of a garden might of itself occupy a life elegantly and pleasurably. Nothing is better able to gratify the inherent passion of novelty; for Nature is always renewing her variegated appearance. She is infinite in her productions, and the life of man may come to its close before he has seen half the pictures which she is able to display. The taste for gardening in England is at present pure. Nature is restored to her throne, and reigns majestically beautiful in rude magnificence. The country abounds with cultivated tracts truly paradisaical. But as the contemplative observer roams over the lawn, and enjoys the shade of the weeping willow, he is often led to enquire, "Where is now the owner of this wilderness of sweets? Happy man!" he exclaims, "to possess such a spot as this, and to be able at all times to taste the pleasure which I feel springing in my bosom." But, alas! the owner is engaged in other scenes. He is rattling over the streets of London, and pursuing all the sophisticated joys, which succeed to supply the place where Nature is relinquished. If he condescends to pay an annual visit to the retreat, he brings with him all his acquired inclinations; and while he sits at the card-table or at the banquet, and thinks of little else than promoting his interest at the next election, he leaves the shrub to blossom and diffuse its sweets in unobserved solitude.

Can it be believed, that nature bestowed beauty on the foliage of a flower but with a view to please? The fruit might be produced, in the same process, without any richness and diversity of colour. No other animals are sensible of their grace but the human; and yet the austere man of business, or the vain man of pleasure, will arraign another with a face of importance for his admiration of a flower. He calls the taste trifling and
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useless.

useless. But is not a refusal to be pleased with such appearances, like the malignant unthankfulness of a sullen guest, who refuses to taste the most delicious dainties prepared for his entertainment?

Fine weather in England is the source of a very sensible pleasure; but he who is engrossed by vice or by business, will live half a life without admiring the beauties of a blue sky, basking in the vernal sunshine, or inhaling, with any consciousness of delight, the balsam of a western gale.

A fondness for the pleasing animals which Nature has placed around us, is another source of natural, and pure, and innocent amusement. The plumage and the song of the bird were doubtless intended to delight the ear and the eye. Who can behold the playful lamb without complacency? The fidelity of the dog, the generosity of the horse, and the characteristic qualities, as well as shape and beauty, of all animated nature, are admirably adapted to charm the heart which is yet unspoiled.

But, in a proper intercourse and behaviour among our fellow-creatures, is found to consist our principal and most constant delight. To do good, and to prevent evil, as far as the sphere of our influence or activity extends, is an infallible method of deriving to ourselves pleasurable emotions. And if we consult what passes in our bosoms, before our youthful sensibilities are blunted, we shall find, that Nature has taught us to find a great pleasure in relieving distress, and in communicating happiness.

The cunning and the crafty, of whom consists a great part of the busy crowd, who derive an unnatural influence from the possession of riches, will deem the simplicity which I have recommended, folly. Such men will deem truth also folly. They consider virtue and truth as words invented to delude the simple ones; but, indeed, to retain through life something of the simplicity of the infant, will render the improved and cultivated *man* truly wise. For, after all the refinements of false philosophy, and the low arts of jesuitical cunning, honesty is our truest interest, and innocence our best wisdom.

No. VIII. ON SUPPORTING THE DIGNITY OF
THE COMMERCIAL CHARACTER.

IN a country whose insular situation has rendered it naturally commercial, it is good policy to place the mercantile profession in an honourable light. It has not usually held a very high place in the esteem of the world; because, in most countries, it has been disgraced by covetousness and circumvention. Its primary object, the accumulation of money, has never appeared with any peculiar lustre in the eyes of those who have seen the beauty of disinterested patriotism and heroic generosity. But at the same time it is certain, that a mercantile life affords scope for the display of many good qualities and of virtues, which, from their sublime and difficult nature, may constitute the merchant a practical philosopher. It affords an ample field for the exercise of commutative justice, of self-denial in refusing to take advantages which might be taken with secrecy; of public virtue, in renouncing all traffic which may be injurious, and in forming every connection, and importing every commodity, which may facilitate the operations of a government. Large and extensive commerce, instead of narrowing, has enlarged the sentiments; and British merchants have, in the two last centuries, joined to the most exemplary integrity the most liberal beneficence.

But it must be owned, that they then appeared most respectable when they least departed from their peculiar character. In the present age they have relinquished the simplicity of their ancestors, and, endeavouring to import the airs and manners of a court into a counting house, have lost their dignity, and diminished their emoluments.

It has been said, that in order to preserve a political constitution in its original purity, it is necessary, at certain intervals, to reduce it to its primary principles. Deviation from right, and encroachment on error, are the natural consequences of human infirmity, in the progressive revolution of affairs. It is therefore as necessary

in morals, as in politics, to return to principles and manners, which have been insensibly forsaken in the pursuit of innovation. The manners of our predecessors, which we now despise as simple and unrefined, will be found, in many instances, more conducive to national and personal happiness, than many among the nominal improvements which have superseded their prevalence.

I will not dwell on general observations, but deduce my remarks from real life. I assert then, that the merchants of the present times are often ashamed of the appellation of citizens. My proof is the fact, that they desert the city. No sooner have they accumulated a competent sum, than the noble mansion in a venerable street is forsaken for a smart house in a new-built square. The principal's presence is thus removed from the scene of action, and opportunities are afforded for every species of idleness and fraud in the inferior substitutes. Habits are contracted, and intimacies formed in the new region, most opposite to the spirit of commerce. Late hours and irregular banquets are not at all conducive to that punctuality which constitutes one of the most valuable and ornamental qualities of a respectable merchant. Great and enormous wealth can indeed support almost any species of folly; but the misfortune is, that they who have their fortunes to make, will emulate those who have already made them. To live at the next door to a peer, or in a street with dukes, is a temptation scarcely resistible. Add to these solid satisfactions of the merchant himself, that the ladies of the family feel new degrees of gentility, like inspiration, gradually come upon them, as they approach more nearly to the purlieus of St. James's.

It was not thus that a Gresham raised a fortune and a reputation equal to the most renowned personages of his time. It was by industry, temperance, regularity, close application, and by leaving those to follow fashion, whose shallow intellects could not find a worthier object to pursue. It would have been an ill exchange to have given up the title of the father of the greatest city in Europe, and the glory of founding a college and a forum, for the petty vanity of residing in the circle of fashion; to have descended from the first in

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the neighbourhood of the Exchange, to be the last in Bloomsbury square.

I would advise the merchant, who would live with real dignity, to make the city respectable, if he does not find it so, by displaying his worth in it. Worthy conduct, with a noble fortune, will aggrandize any place. Adorn that situation in which it is your lot to be fixed. *Spartan, quam nactus es, orna.* Where, indeed, ought men to expend their opulence more readily than where it was amassed, where their characters are known, and their virtues valued?

Many evils result from this general emigration. The influence of good example is lost among the numerous tribe of apprentices, clerks, and journeymen, who are the rising generation of merchants; but whose morals are early tainted with the foulest infection, by running after those vanities and pleasures which their superintendant appears so anxiously to pursue. They are led to despise that city and those manners which their master avoids, as a place of contamination.

The city of London, as a corporate body, suffers at this moment by the contempt of the members who owe it most respect. When the rich and respectable leave it, who are to fill its magistracies and its council? The lower orders of tradesmen, destitute of education and of liberal views, and thrust forward into office by nothing but their own pragmatism activity. No wonder a corporation has lost its influence and sullied its honours, when those, who stand forth as its leaders, are the meanest of its members. The opulent and most consequential have packed up their effects, as soon as they have acquired all they wanted, and have left the pillaged city to stand or fall, as it may happen. They are no longer citizens; but esquires at their villas, and courtiers within the vicinity of the palace. Like the reptile, they have dropt their slough, and shine with a new cuticle.

A time has been, when merchants only retired to their villas when they had accumulated their fortunes. They now begin with a villa, as if it were as necessary as a warehouse; and end with bankruptcy as naturally, as reluctantly, and as unblushingly, as if it had been the

the honourable object of their mercantile pursuit. Distress and difficulty excite meanness and artifice; fraud and injustice soon follow, and the dignity of the British merchant is sunk in the scandalous appellation of a Swindler.

The fall of the eminent trader involves many in the misfortune. His wife and children are reduced from a life of splendour and luxury to indigence and obscurity; to a state which they bear less patiently, because they have been accustomed to indulge their vanity and pride without controul. Vice, and every species of misery, are encreased by this imprudent conduct in his own family, and poverty brought into the houses of his inferior assistants or dependants, who have either entrusted him with their money or their labour unrepaid.

This is a picture drawn from life: what it represents daily occurs; and the whole of it is occasioned by the merchant's departure from his natural and his most becoming character.

In order to resume that character, let him consider what virtues his department of life particularly requires. He will find them to be industry, honesty, and frugality. Let him seriously pursue them, nor be ashamed of them when he has succeeded in his pursuit. Let him not dread the appellation of a dull cit, nor any of those jokes, with which the envy and malice of wiflings console themselves on another's superiority. Let him assure himself, that the character of a man of integrity and benevolence, is far more desirable than that of a man of pleasure or of fashion. The one is like solid gold, the other like tinsel; the one is like a venerable oak, the other like the gaudy and transitory tulip; the one is always blest and a blessing, the other frequently a curse. Dare to be what you are, is a rule which, if observed, would secure to men that happiness, of which the greater part never see any thing but the phantom, the cloud, in the place of the goddess.

The great source of mercantile miscarriage is, that the merchant usually begins in a mode of life which should naturally adorn a successful conclusion. He begins, as it has been before observed, with a rural retreat, and with expensive relaxations; with those pleasures

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which should, in the regular course, be reserved as the reward of his toils, and the comfort of his age. He spends his active days in superfluous and unsatisfactory indulgence, and dooms the winter of life to want, to neglect, to a prison, or an alms-house. I believe it is true, that at least as many bankrupts are made by some species of misconduct, as by misfortune.

In a country abounding with merchants, some of these hints will be thought useful, and will be adopted by a few in the rising generation; and the example of a few may in time be generally followed, and constitute at last a prevailing mode of mercantile life.

No. IX. AN IDEA OF A PATRIOT.

HEROIC virtue, in its most exalted and comprehensive degree, though often celebrated, is not often found. It must indeed, like all other prodigies, appear but seldom. To produce it, it is necessary that, besides an union of the finest qualities of the heart and understanding, many favourable contingencies, which no abilities can command, should at once concur in the same individual. A Cæsar and an Alexander, if they had been born in a cottage, and had lived in a village, would have died in obscurity. And, indeed, after all the eulogia passed upon them, it may be fairly asked, Whether, if such had been their lot, mankind would have had cause to lament?

None but a barbarous age can admire the bloody triumphs of the mere conqueror; but every age must agree in extolling the true patriot. True patriotism, which is a species of heroic virtue, and indeed the best species of it, does not often occur. The name is daily assumed, and in our country has lost its dignity by prostitution. It has been wantonly lavished on those who, from the worst motives, have fomented faction, and kindled the flames of rebellion. It has been denied to the preservers of their country, and given to the destroyers of it; to those who have spent their lives, and exercised

exercised the abilities they possessed, in producing all those evils which the institution of civil society was intended to extirpate. They evidently have had little else in view, but to render themselves of consequence enough to be bought by a corrupt administration. Selfishness and spite, pride and a levelling principle, are qualities very unfavourable to the existence of civil liberty. Yet these qualities have appeared very clearly in those who have laboured to be forced into power by the efforts of a fascinated populace.

For the sake then of those orders among us whose hearts are good and truly English, but who, from the want of education or leisure, are not apt to think coolly when they select a favourite leader, and who are often cruelly and villanously deluded to their own destruction, and to the detriment of that liberty which they love, I will endeavour to describe those characters which appear to me truly patriotic.

In the first place, I would lay it down as an axiom, That a bad man cannot be a patriot. Even the badness of his heart may lead him to assume all the deceitful appearances of patriotism. His envy, and his disappointed avarice and ambition, will induce him to revile those who are in possession of lucrative and powerful employments, and this will appear like a noble opposition to the strides of power. To serve his purposes, he will declaim on liberty, and this will soon collect a party. Fools and wicked men abound. These soon herd together, and even render themselves of some consequence by their numbers. Honest men are drawn in by the violence of the vortex, and the wicked leader at last gains his selfish views, or at least obtains the satisfaction of mortifying those whom he envies. At all events, he is sure of one pleasure, which is congenial to his heart, that of spreading mischief and confusion. I repeat, therefore, that it will be necessary to convince ourselves, that a bad husband, a bad father, a profligate and an unprincipled man, cannot deserve the name of a patriot, unless it is given him, as it may indeed in the present age, by way of derision. A man of no private virtue must want principle; and a man who wants principle cannot be actuated by pure motives. He cannot entertain so liberal

ral and exalted an affection as a rational and disinterested love of his country. He may accidentally be right in his opposition to a court; but he is a bad man, and it is not safe to trust to him. He may be the wicked instrument of gratifying my spleen or his own; but yet I will think before I lift up my hand to vote for him, lest his turbulence, united with the power which I may assist in delegating to him, may involve my country in war, riot, and rebellion. I will remember what is past, and be cautious.

Much has been said by the declamatory on the subject of a Patriot King. I believe it happy for a nation when the King has not the qualities of a declaimer's patriot, of an active warrior, or a contentious orator. When a King possesses or arrogates the character of a hero, his reign is often sanguinary, and terminates in despotism. Moderation, justice, lenity, and a pacific disposition, are the most valuable, if not the most glittering jewels in a crown. I almost fear to apply the remark to the King of England, lest I should be suspected of interested adulation. But truth must prevail. And when I see the chief magistrate a good son, a good husband, a good father, I think it a favourable presage of all that is amiable and useful to society. When I see him also possessing fortitude enough to turn a deaf ear to the importunate petitions and remonstrances of a deluded faction; when I see him sacrificing with alacrity his own wishes and views to the will of his People at large; when I see him rendering the judges independent; when I see him anxious to preserve the liberties of the meanest of his subjects, delighted with benevolent actions, seeking and ensuing peace from motives of philanthropy, yet prosecuting war with all the spirit of a righteous cause; encouraging arts, and promoting discoveries; when I see all his amiable dispositions, and his many laudable acts, I venture to pronounce George the Third a Patriot King. The characters of kings are indeed but uncertainly known while they live; and I am ready to confess, that I derive my ideas of the King of Britain from no other sources but public acts and popular reports.

If a peer of the realm is found to be in constant opposition to the measures of a ministry, it is easy to know the

the causes and the extent of his patriotism; for a minister cannot always be wrong. The truth is, that the peer is of a conceited and turbulent spirit, yet unemployed by his King. He lusts after power, and hopes to acquire it by force, since it cannot be obtained by gentler means. He will even patronize rebellion, and diffuse discontent throughout a kingdom, to injure a few individuals, whose riches he covets, and whose honours he views with an envious eye. Though he should sign a hundred protests in a session, and daily eructate his invectives against the most respectable men, we will not be misled; for his patriotism is passion, his perseverance avarice; and the same tongue which is ready to revile his King and embroil his country, is usually as prone to blaspheme his God. When they whom the constitution has appointed hereditary guardians of the laws and liberties, and religion of their country, become the patrons of lawless licentiousness, and the scoffers at every thing held sacred, why hesitate their countrymen to strip the coronet from their heads, and trample their honour in the dust? Tear off their ermine, and that star which belies their breast; for the meanest of their menials, who performs his humble duties in his humble station, is far nobler than they. There ought to be a power of degradation from honour, as well as of advancement, in every well-regulated community. Such an institution would contribute to preserve true nobility, and to secure the interests of virtue in every rank and condition.

With respect to the noisy declaimers, and the quiet instruments of power in the lower order of senators, their patriotism is well understood. The one side resembles Cerberus barking for a sop, the other resembles him when, after he has received it, he wraps himself up in his own warm skin, and enjoys a comfortable doze. The public has been too long deluded to be again deceived. They see the faults, and no longer admire, but look for a palliation of them in the common weakness of human nature. Of all oppositions, scarcely any have been more violent and active, and scarcely any less successful, than that which has harassed Great Britain during the greater part of the present reign. And of all venality, none was ever more openly avowed than the present.

In search of patriots, let us turn our attention to the naval and military order. And when we take a retrospect of this department, let us learn to be cautious how we again illuminate our houses, and render our throats hoarse with reiterated acclamation. However we may doat on their names, they are no patriots, who, from party principles, or from personal pique, voluntarily suffer our perfidious and inveterate enemy to insult the British flag unchastised. They are no patriots who wish to exalt the military above the civil power. They are no patriots who, in a time when every military arm ought to have wielded the sword, relinquish their employ because they hate a minister. They are no patriots, but they are poltrons. In which class also are to be placed, those generals, who, when sent on the service of their country, lavish the money with which they are entrusted in unnecessary profusion, and return without an action,—*cauponantes bellum non belligerentes*,—who bluster and boast, but who, to save their lives, will lose their honour, and endanger their country's existence.

And what are those writers to be called, who, perverting the perfection of reason and the fruits of learning, endeavour to unsettle all our principles under the pretence of asserting our liberty? Patriots shall we call them? Alas! when I see them obviously actuated by pride and vanity, and, for the sake of being distinguished, endeavouring to overturn good order and tranquillity, I call them the enemies of the human race; and if I did not pity their delusion, I might execrate their names. It is certain, that writers who have meant little more than to raise a literary reputation, have excited the most dreadful commotions in the commonwealth.

I will venture to advance an opinion rather paradoxical, but certainly well founded: The truest patriotism is not to be found in public life. Selfish motives commonly instigate the noisy votaries of ambition and popularity. But what can influence him who secretly serves his country in the retired and unobserved walks of private life? His motives must be pure, and he *is a patriot*. Men of fortune and dignity, who, dwelling peaceably in the habitation of their fathers, set a good example; who endeavour to preserve from the rude hand of innovation all the good institutions of our ancestors; who are
given

given to hospitality, ready to assist with their presence and their purse in all public business and useful charities: Men of this kind *are truly patriots*. Every good man is indeed a patriot; for a good man is a public good. But poverty, and an humble and a private station, must circumscribe the beneficial influence of goodness; and it does not fall to the lot of many in a century to possess the power and good dispositions of a *North*.

What I now say may be attributed to interested adulation. I regard not the imputation, for it is not just. I never heard any ill of the man, or of the minister, but what proceeded from the venomous tongue of faction; and I know that he has steered the vessel of state amidst such storms as would have dashed it in pieces, if those patriots, who increased the tempest, that they might make themselves necessary in the distress, had been employed as pilots—And, in justice to the writer, let it be remembered, that this able minister and worthy man was out of place when this essay was first made public, and had not offended his admirers by an unexpected coalition.

No. X. THE RESPECTABLE CHARACTER OF THE CLERGY.

IT seems probable at first sight, that an order of men who devote themselves entirely to the instruction of their fellow-creatures, would be exempted from envy and from hatred. As their studies are peaceable, and their labours directed to the diffusion of goodness, and consequently of tranquillity, both public and private, it is natural to suppose, that the better part of the world would view them with favour, and that even the profligate would behave to them with distant respect.

But it is certain, that scarcely any other body of men so large and considerable, has been more unkindly treated than the clergy. Every patron of infidelity, who endeavours to pierce the sides of the Redeemer, points the envenomed weapon at his ministers. But the patrons of infidelity have always been found, on close examination, no less superficial and sophistical, than malignant and presumptuous. They have therefore fixed indiffer-

minate

minately upon every clergyman the imputation of certain odious sentiments of a political nature ; as if it were consistent with reason or common sense to suppose, that the moment a gentleman of liberal education receives a legal commission from the ecclesiastical superior, to pray aloud in an assembly, or to read a moral and religious discourse in it, all his political sentiments are rendered erroneous, or dissimilar to the opinions of those among his countrymen who are equally enlightened.

That the clerical sentiments in politics, supposing that the clergy entertain any peculiar to their profession, are favourable to liberty, and to all the dearest rights of mankind in the aggregate, and of individuals in their relative connections, might be clearly proved by historical evidence. My design does not permit me to expatiate in the field of history, or it were easy to produce very signal instances of the noble stand they have made for liberty, religious as well as civil.

They have also sometimes been hostile to freedom. But so have many of the nobles of the time, and many of the inferior orders among the laity. They pursued that civil conduct, and adopted those political sentiments, which were agreeable to them as men, and not peculiar to them as clergy men. If they acted from honest principles, though their judgment should be impeached for error, no censure will fall on their clerical profession. When they became clergymen, they did not renounce their rights as men ; nor their liberty of judging and acting, which they derived from the constitution of that community to whose support they contributed.

It is inequitable to judge of the present race of ecclesiastics from the specimens afforded in the darker ages. The clergy were then ignorant, vicious, and superstitious ; but the laity were more so. The clergy were such as they must have been without sufficient employment, without examples, without learning, and without the means of acquiring it. Yet, even in this unpromising state, they were serviceable to letters and to virtue. They transcribed and preserved books, though they often did not understand what they wrote, nor know the value of their treasures. They preserved those lamps of learning from which, though they derived but little light, the world has been since illuminated.

But to enter on the merits or demerits of clerical individuals of past ages, is to engage in a subject too diffuse to be consistent with the present purpose. It may be more advantageous, as well as practicable, to consider this respectable body as it appears at present. The clergy, like all other orders in society, undergo a change in the progressive vicissitude of times and manners; and what might truly characterize them in one age, or in one country, will misrepresent them in another. In the papal church, and under an absolute government, they are totally different from a Protestant and an English clergy; they are not so much the ministers of the humble Jesus, as the tools of a secular and ecclesiastical despot. In a country like ours, they imbibe the liberal spirit of our civil constitution; and, by the light of their learning and morals, greatly add to the general lustre. Indeed, if an individual cease to be valued, the fault is usually his own. Improper levities, compliances, or negligences, diminish that dignity which his office, his labours, and his learning, would otherwise maintain.

Of the dignitaries of the church it is no uncommon topic to complain. They are often represented as the drones of society; as idly slumbering in a stall, without making any return to the public for the ease and luxury which they abundantly enjoy. Selfishness, avarice, and voluptuousness, are satirically attributed to them as their distinguishing characteristics; and it is remarked, that they would be blanks in society, were not their existence demonstrated by an unceasing pursuit of money, preferment, and luxurious gratification.

But, in answer to these acrimonious reflections, we may say in general, that all situations which possess many happy circumstances with little labour or anxiety, will naturally excite envy and malignity. The dignitaries of the church enjoy that ease and those innocent pleasures in which men naturally repose, when they possess a competency without the necessity of solicitude. That they step not from their proper sphere, to engage in the conflicts of party, redounds to their honour. Parochial employments are regularly filled by other persons. To invade the province of the officiating clergy would be to disturb that order which constitutes one of the beauties of religion itself, as well as of all ecclesiastical establishments.

ments. If they are decent and pacific, benevolent in their neighbourhood, hospitable to the inferior clergy, and virtuous in private life, they are, notwithstanding the appearance of indolence, both ornamental and useful to the church and to society. They are more respectable than if their restlessness led them to be at the head of an association, or to recommend polygamy. And with respect to the expediency of dignities in the church, I am not of the same opinion with those pe- nurious philosophers whose ideas of utility are circumscribed within the limits of actual profit. As human nature is constituted, something is to be allowed to external appearance, and something to innocent enjoyment. Wealth, ease, and honour, such as are included in ecclesiastical dignities, operate as allurements to bring many into the church who become valuable members of it, but who would otherwise have wasted their lives in a state of vicious indolence, and without any profession. I would neither divest a king nor a prelate of those outworks which either defend him from contempt, or facilitate the exercise of his jurisdiction, or contribute to his complacency.

If persons thus exalted to ease and honour, and thus exempted from exertion, lower themselves, by remarkable levity, by rendering themselves most conspicuous at all public places, and by patronizing vanity, they then become truly despicable, and richly deserve the public resentment. That the majority of dignitaries preserve their character, and are respectable, I firmly believe; and I say it without partiality or adulation, for I have not the happiness to know or to be known to a single individual in the church above the rank of a parish priest. I should indeed consider it as presumptuous in me to give my opinion, if I did not consider at the same time, that the natural liberty of a man is not lost by the want of connection with ecclesiastical dignity.

The character and office of a parish priest, when uniformly and completely maintained, are most useful and honourable. A worthy parish priest is the father of his parish, the guardian of the poor, the instructor of the ignorant, the protector of the injured, the friend of all;
even

even of those who are deaf to his instructions, and despise his profession. If any human office can be justly called godlike, it is the office of a parish priest.

But when I turn my attention to real facts, I frequently find the ministers of parishes neither the objects of love nor of esteem. This is sometimes occasioned by the prevalence of infidelity, and sometimes, as it must happen while the clergy are men, by their own want of merit and their bad behaviour. But one cause of their losing their influence is, that the laity, in this age of scepticism, grudge them their tythes. The decay of religion, and the contempt of the clergy, arise in a great measure from this source.

I will not enter fully on the subject of tythes; but I will make a cursory remark. Let the laity ask themselves, by what tenure any one among them has a better right than any other to reap the produce of any particular field, and to exclude others of the laity from it. They must answer, by the laws of the country in which they reside. But the same laws have given the clergy a right to a decimal part. If obedience is due to the law in one respect, it is due also in the other. And a man who has no land at all, may as justly complain that his neighbour assumes an exclusive right to the acres contiguous to his dwelling; as the possessor of the acres, that the clergyman claims a tenth part of their produce. The rights of the clergy indeed stand on a basis more solid than the national constitution. The objections raised against them originate in selfishness, greediness, and the unfeeling stupidity of irreligion. Every candid and considerate mind must rejoice that the clergy have often spirit enough to prosecute their legal claims against the harpies of avarice.

If the incumbent made no claim on the purse of his parishioner, he might be loved and esteemed, and at least suffered to live and die in peace. But his wife and his children are dear to him, and have an equal right, by all the laws of God and man, to be fed and clothed, with those of the esquire or farmer who litigates his claim. He is cruel, and worse than a Heathen, who endeavours not to provide for his own

child, by receiving what is justly his due; since, if he does not receive it, that child, the very moment he expires, may be spurned as a beggar from the door of the churlish peasant who robbed the father of his right.

But where is the utility of the clergy? exclaims the boor, who pays his land-tax cheerfully, but refuses his tithes. Surely, one might answer, national good does not consist only in the number of ships which arrive in our ports, the extent of our dominions, and the abundance of our armaments. Good morals and internal tranquillity are in reality of more value, whatever ostentation these may display. These, indeed, according to their original design, are only instrumental to the establishment of internal peace and social happiness, though they are daily abused to effect the purposes of avarice and ambition, and are always talked of as the first objects. If, then, good morals and internal tranquillity are the chief national good, as they certainly are in the eye of Heaven and of dispassionate reason, the clergy must be allowed to deserve their very moderate emoluments; for let us consider how many millions are lavished in the support of armaments, and how very small a pittance, in comparison, supports the parochial clergy, to whose important ends, internal peace and happiness, the armaments are only subordinately, mechanically, and remotely subservient. That minister or financier, whatever the world may think, possesses a narrow and unphilosophical mind, who estimates the good of a people solely by the extent of their commerce and the largeness of the revenue. When these are in their most flourishing state, the people as individuals, and therefore the nation, may be in their decline. Luxury and vice of every kind may be diffusing misery among all the individuals, in the nation; and can there be a national happiness independent of the happiness of the majority of individuals, or consistent with their misery? According to the wretched system of worldly-minded politicians, there can. Nay, even the misery of individuals is often promoted and encouraged, in order to increase this political happiness, which exists only as an ideal phantom. Intoxication and gaming, for instance, as they increase the revenue, are at this moment tacitly encouraged

throughout England. The consumption of spirituous liquors, though it slays millions at home, helps to support those wars abroad, which ambition and wickedness have sometimes rendered politically necessary.

But the clergy recommend innocence, contentment, temperance, and all the moral virtues, with all the blessings and comforts which attend them; and in estimating their national utility, let a liberal and benevolent man consider, what an advantage it is to have moral instructors diffused over the kingdom, established in the remotest villages, not only among the polished, but among the rudest of our countrymen, who would probably relapse into barbarism and savage brutality, if their minds were not cultivated by weekly lectures, powerfully recommending, by the most awful sanctions, all that is humane and friendly to human nature and civil society. And yet the public, who pay a soldier liberally and cheerfully, often, in this age, bestow with reluctance what the law of God and of their country has allotted to the clergyman, and what his order can claim by the most ancient prescription. They refuse, at the same time, that degree of reverence to him which ought to be more highly valued by him than his revenue, as it is absolutely necessary to the success of his pastoral labour.

I will here pay that tribute of respect which justice owes to the Dissenting Ministers. The gravity of their manners, and their judicious conduct in a variety of instances, has deservedly procured them a very considerable share of public estimation. Many among them, besides a Watts, have illustriously adorned human nature.

With respect to the order of Curates, on whom the essential business of a national clergy chiefly devolves, all the respect which is due to the clergy in general, and to the active clergy in particular, is indisputably due to them. The mediocrity of their stipends may indeed degrade them in the eyes of the rich vulgar; in the eyes of those, who feeling the obvious good of money, and insensible to other excellence, idolize Mammon, and despise those who possess it not in superfluous abundance. But the Christian will consider their poverty as one of their chief honours. That they are capable of maintaining a decent appearance, and discharging

ing the expences which are necessary to their subsistence, with an income less than that of many mechanics, reflects on them more true credit than would be derived from the possession of an ample fortune. Though human pride may spurn them, yet their God will honour them; and when they perform their arduous duties with conscientious regularity, even bad men must yield them an involuntary deference.

When indeed they affectedly assume the character of libertines and rakes, and dress themselves so as to suggest an idea that they are ashamed of appearing as clergymen; when they take the lead in public diversions; when they are eminently careless and immoral; then it is neither to be wondered nor lamented, that they are punished with universal contempt. But the world is prone to be malignantly censorious, and to require a degree of perfection which no mortal can uniformly display, whatever may be his office, whatever his virtues, and whatever his intentions. Continued and uniform profligacy can scarcely be treated with too much rigour, when it appears in those who have separated themselves to inculcate good precepts, and to exhibit good examples; but when we find ourselves inclined to censure a clergyman for a small fault,

— *quam incuria fudit:*

Aut humana parum cavit natura.

HOR.

and without palpable reasons, let us ask our own hearts, whether, if we were in their place, we should be able to preserve an unerring rectitude?

I have thus taken the liberty of speaking my sentiments, with a view to vindicate the general character of the clergy. They are indeed sufficiently able to defend themselves; but every individual ought to contribute something to the general defence, when the attack is general. And I have the rather undertaken this business, from a conviction, that when the clergy are despised, they will degenerate; and that with them will decline the morals, the learning, the religion, the importance, and the happiness of this country.

No. XI. ON THE TENDENCY OF MORAL
PROFLIGACY TO DESTROY CIVIL LIBERTY.

IT appears from a review of the world, that where ever man is denied the enjoyment of civil liberty, he not only loses much of his natural happiness, but much also of his natural dignity. His spirit is broken, his sentiments are depraved, and he seems contented to lead a life merely animal. Athens still stands, but where are the Athenians?

It is not indeed true, that the arts of painting, sculpture, and architecture, cannot flourish in the land of despotism. The productions of these arts contribute to the pleasure of the luxurious, if they are considered only in the humiliating light of ornamental furniture; they will therefore be bought at a high price; and where the artist is rewarded amply, ingenuity and manual labour will eagerly co-operate in producing works of imitation. The hope of gain will excite competition; and competition, emulation; and emulation, excellence. Historical facts might be adduced to prove the truth of this theory; for the best productions of art have appeared in the arbitrary governments of Europe, and some of the worst in the republican. Indeed it is by no means certain, that the imitative arts, may not be rendered, by political perversion, subservient to the purposes of introducing despotism. A whole people of Dilettanti are not likely to make a very manly stand against the encroachments of that royal power under which they find their imbecility protected. We shall not easily find a Hampden in a connoisseur. When public places of pleasure multiply in the capital, and the encouragement which should be given to active virtue and to literature, is transferred to artists, the jealous guardian of the liberties of his country may justly increase his vigilance. The arts ought to be encouraged: but they ought also to be kept in their proper subordination: for what are they in them-

selves? After all that the loquacious and conceited pretenders to taste have advanced, they are but means of amusement. They constitute indeed a most elegant and delightful amusement; but that which is only an amusement, must possess a rank subordinate to those pursuits which tend to give stability to empire, to enlighten the intellects, to reform the morals of the people, and to found political happiness on the broad and massy basis of moral virtue, manly fortitude, and religious confidence.

But it is not with the manly virtues as with the polite arts. If they thrive at all in an arbitrary government, they thrive like exotic plants, which can never possess their native vigour or maturity. But what is life in such circumstances as preclude every generous exertion which can render it rationally valuable? When man is compelled to sleep away his existence, or spend it in a wearisome reiteration of the animal functions, life is not life; and therefore we may conclude, that it is a rational, as well as enthusiastic passion, which every independent Englishman feels for liberty.

But liberty is too often misunderstood, and the mistaken ideas of it sometimes endanger its continuance. Vice also, when it becomes enormous and universal, is inevitably fatal to liberty. I mean then to derive an additional argument in favour of virtue, from its connection with liberty, and from its efficacy in giving stability to the political constitution of a free country. And certainly, if the love of our country is so general as the pretensions to it, many who are addicted to libertine practices and principles will be led to encourage, by precept and example, that decency and regularity, that temperance and industry, that religion and fortitude, which constitute a better bulwark against attacks upon our liberty, than our boasted fleets and armies. I believe they will find, that the several national vices, which I shall presently enumerate, are peculiarly adverse to the prevalence and permanency of legal freedom.

Without examining the definitions of politicians or logicians, I denominate that a state of liberty in which

every man's person, property, and free agency, is secured or circumscribed by laws, which have been agreed to by the majority of the people at large, either directly or indirectly; either in their own persons, or by a representation primarily and tacitly, if not expressly, allowed by the people, for the convenience of public debate; which public debate could never come to a conclusion, if the debating assembly were composed of every individual in an empire. Salutary restraint is, then, the very principle of liberty; and they who, from their restless dispositions, or from misapprehension, endeavour to throw off every species of coercion, are in reality enemies to that freedom which they pretend to promote.

But of these the number is small, in comparison with others; who, without thinking of consequences which appear to them remote, slide imperceptibly into a conduct, which, though it destroys not the fair fabric of liberty at once, and by an assault, gradually saps the firmness of its foundation.

Luxury will always be indulged to excess in a rich and powerful country, abounding with that species of internal and imported commodities which can be only subservient to pleasure and ostentation. Every year brings an increase to luxury; for, as it is founded in a great measure on vanity, the rich will be perpetually seeking distinction. As soon as they have displayed one mode of luxury, it is imitated; and, in order to obtain distinction, another must be adopted; and this dereliction and adoption are found to proceed in perpetual succession. No fortune can supply unbounded expence; and the consequence is, that the great and noble are soon impoverished: but vanity is, in general, a more powerful principle than patriotism; and therefore, for the sake of supporting a splendid figure, they who ought to stand up as the guardians of constitutional liberty become ready to make any sacrifice to a minister, in exchange for a lucrative employment. The middle and the lowest ranks follow the example of the nobles, by incurring expences which neither their patrimonies nor their personal industry can support. They therefore become alike dependent

and in the extremities of their distress are ready to sell their birthright for a mess of pottage. But luxury, by involving all orders in distress, not only deprives them of their independence, but naturally tends to weaken the understandings and vitiate the morals of the people at large. But no weak or bad man can ever entertain a proper love for liberty, or have it in his power to assert it with efficacy when it is infringed. They who are immersed in voluptuousness, whether of the table or of any grosser kind, will consider liberty and the love of our country as names only fitted to adorn a poem, a romance, or a school-boy's declamation. They who build houses, and heap up costly pictures and furniture, with the money of an honest artizan or mechanic, will be very glad to be emancipated from the hands of a bailiff by the sale of their senatorial suffrage. Luxury indeed disposes to general indolence; and he who is overcome by its deceitful allurements, will think it a fortunate exchange to be freed from the noise and turbulence of liberty by the dead repose of established despotism.

Levity, which is indeed intimately allied to luxury, is fatal to liberty. They who resolve never to think seriously, will suffer themselves to be robbed of all that is valuable, without reluctance. Nothing can be more remote from levity, than the characters of those among the ancients who distinguished themselves as the champions of the natural rights which belong to human nature. The very idea of Brutus, in the dress and with the grimace and the levity of a modern Frenchman, and of a modern Englishman who apes the Frenchman, is laughable. Whatever is great and valuable in society requires spirit and vigilance to perfect and preserve it; for nothing great and valuable is perfected and preserved by chance. But how shall he contribute an adequate share to the common mass of public good in the senate, in the field, on the bench, in the pulpit, or in the family, whose mind is engrossed by trifles, and who shrinks from all that is serious, as the bane of his fancied felicity? They who have raised an empire have always been grave and severe; they who have ruined it have been uniformly distinguished for their dissipation.

It is the predominance of mental strength, and the vigour of stern virtue, which contributes chiefly to superior strength and prosperity of empire. If it be true, then, that we are adopting the levities of a foreign nation which has never known the sweets of liberty; if it be true, that the greater part of the people are forever in pursuit of dissipating pleasure; if it be true, that our manners are universally trifling, and our conversation futile; it is time that those who value liberty should take the alarm, and endeavour to set better examples, lest it should appear, that amidst all our delights we are preparing slavery for our children; an idea which ought to embitter the sweetest of them in the midst of enjoyment.

The want of a liberal and manly education will render us unable to perceive the value of liberty. It will also prevent the acquisition of that dignity and authority of mind which alone can make a successful stand against the encroachments of power. Ignorance is mean, and cannot offer those generous sacrifices which our duty to our country demands, when its liberties are endangered. A mind destitute of a proper education will be easily deluded by the sophistical arguments of those, who, to serve selfish purposes, are ready to explain away every dear-bought privilege, with a view to make converts to doctrines detrimental to the rights of mankind. And with respect to those who are educated indeed, but educated in the manners and sentiments of a hostile country, though they may be descended from Tudors and Plantagenets, yet their hearts are not English. They consider all our virtues, and all our religious scruples, as insular prejudices; and if Englishmen were to permit them to import their improvements, they would establish a *Grand Monarque*, and shew that they think the world was made for dukes, marquises, lords, and counts, to take their pastime in; and that such canaille as the body of English freeholders are only fit to be *cuisniers* or *perruquiers*, to decorate their apish persons, and tickle their vitiated palates.

It needs no argument to prove, that an inordinate attachment to self-interest, that the excessive love of money or venality, tends directly to subvert our liberties;

ties; for he who is inclined to do any thing to promote his sordid interest, will sell his share of his country's rights as soon as he finds a willing purchaser. When the African prince pronounced, that all was venal at Rome, Roman virtue was departed. Liberty would not linger when deserted by Virtue, but left the throne to despotism, who assumed the imperial purple, and for ages cursed mankind.

An excessive zeal for liberty, like all excessive zeal, injures the cause it means to serve. Faction and sedition disgrace free countries, and introduce such evils as make the lovers of repose almost wish for the tranquillity of despotism. Ebullitions will sometimes arise in a free community, like humours in a healthy body; and, when they preserve the limits of moderation, they are to be considered as symptoms of a sound constitution. But when they rise too high, and continue too long, they are like a gangrene, which gradually diffuses itself till it destroys the vitality of the subject from which it originates.

It will indeed be found, that all conduct which is extensively injurious to individuals, is ultimately injurious to the body politic. And I hope it will be adopted as an incontestible truth, that political good, like moral good, when it is solid and substantial, is always the result of an adherence to reason and virtue, prudence and religion.

No. XII. ON THAT KIND OF WISDOM WHICH CONSISTS IN ACCOMMODATION AND COMPLIANCE, WITHOUT ANY PRINCIPLES BUT THOSE OF SELFISHNESS.

THERE is a mean and sneaking kind of wisdom (I can allow it no better epithets) which marks the present times, and consists in a compliance with the inclinations, and an assent to the opinions, of those with whom we converse, however opposite they may be to

our own, or to those we complied with or assented to in the last company in which we were engaged. And this cunning and cautious behaviour is honoured with the name of true politeness, good sense, and knowledge of the world; or, to speak in the technical language of fashion, taking the *ton* of your company. When it is closely examined, it appears to originate in timidity, in a mean and excessive regard to self-interest, and to be utterly inconsistent with the principles of honesty. "A person of discretion," says the sensible and satirical Collier, "will take care not to embarrass his life, nor expose himself to calumny, nor let his conscience grow too strong for his interest; he never crosses a prevailing mistake, nor opposes any mischief that has numbers and prescription on its side. His point is to steal upon the blind side, and apply to the affections; to flatter the vanity and play upon the weakness of those in power or interest, and to make his fortune out of the folly of his neighbours."

I venture however to affirm, that he who adopts this conduct, however plausible his appearance, however oily his tongue, and benevolent his professions, is no honest man. He would not for the world contradict you, or in any respect express his disapprobation of your taste or your choice. But why would he not? Is it because he really thinks as you think, and feels as you feel? Impossible. For he will assent to opinions diametrically opposite, as soon as he goes from your door to your next neighbour. Is it because he is so abundantly good-natured as to fear lest he should give you pain by contradiction? Believe it not. It is true indeed, that he fears to contradict you; but it is only lest he should lose your favour; and it is a maxim with him to court the favour of every individual, because he may one day want his assistance in accomplishing the objects of his covetousness or his ambition. While, therefore, he is entering into your views, approving your taste, confirming your observations; what think you passes in his mind? Himself is the subject of his thoughts; and while you imagine that he is concurring with your opinion, and admiring your judgment, he is only meditating how he may most easily insinuate himself into your favour. Such

cautious,

cautious, timid, subtle men are very common in the world, and so are highwaymen and pickpockets.

It must be owned, with regret, that this deceitful intercourse is too often the mode of converse among those self-elevated beings who have separated themselves from the rest of mankind, under the name of People of Fashion. Among these empty dictators of external forms you must learn to take the tone of every body with whom you converse, except indeed of the vulgar. With the grave you must be grave, and with the gay you must be gay; with the vicious you must be vicious, and with the good and learned as good and learned as the best of them, if you can; but if you are not quite adept enough in dissimulation to have attained this excellence, it is safest to keep out of their way; for they are apt to speak disagreeable truths, and to be quite insufferable *bêtes*. This versatility and duplicity of the *grand monde* may indeed constitute a man of the world; but let it be remembered, that a book of some authority classifies the world, when spoken of in this sense, with the devil.

The over-cautious wise men of these times are very fond of getting into the company of an honest man; when, by throwing out leading ideas, or by asking insidious questions, they contrive to learn all his sentiments without uttering an opinion of their own. I have known some of these close gentlemen of the *volto sciolto* and the *pensieri stretti*, so reserved and mysterious, and at the same time so inquisitive, that you would have imagined them commissioned spies of an American congress, or members of the privy-council at home, if you had not perceived, that their intellects were as shallow as their hearts were cowardly. If, after you have opened yourself, you ask their opinion, they answer, that really they do not know what to say, they have not quite made up their minds on the subject; some people, they find, think one way, and some another. With respect to themselves, they hint that though they were at first very doubtful, yet your arguments seem almost to have made them converts to your opinions; and, whatever the event may be, you have fully proved that reason is of your side; or, if it is not, you have shewn amazing ingenuity and abilities in saying so much on a side

which cannot be defended. Then, after having gained their point of sounding your sentiments, the conversation turns to the topics of the weather or the wind.

They display a most outrageous affectation of candour. They are always ready to make allowances for the infirmities of human nature, except when a rival or an object of their hatred is to be injured, and then, though it is not their disposition to be censorious, though it is well known they always palliate what they can, yet, in this particular case, they will whisper, what they would not speak loud, nor have go any farther; they will whisper, that they believe the report, however horrid, to be strictly true, and indeed rather a favourable account; for if you knew as much as they do, they insinuate that you would be shocked indeed: but, however, they declare they will not in candour disclose what they know. So that we may conclude, as indeed is often the case, that badness of heart is united with their pusillanimity. They are affectedly kind when their selfish views are to be promoted by kindness, but really and most implacably malevolent when the same purposes are more effectually served by malevolence, or when they have an opportunity of gratifying their envy and malice.

Where compliance and assent, caution and candour, arise from a natural tenderness of disposition and softness of nature, as they sometimes do, they are almost amiable and certainly excusable, but as the effects of artifice, they must be despised. The persons who possess them are, indeed, often themselves dupes of their own deceit, when they imagine others are deluded by it. For excessive art always betrays itself; and many, who do not openly take notice of the deceiver, from motives of delicacy and tenderness for his character, secretly deride and warmly resent his ineffectual subtilty. Cunning people are apt, as it has been well observed, to entertain too mean an opinion of the intellects of those with whom they converse, and to suppose that they can be moved like puppets by the secret wires which they play behind the curtain. But the puppets are often refractory, and the spectators, on whom the awkward experiment of delusion has been tried, always displeased.

Lucrative

Lucrative views are the usual motives which allure the sycophant to his mean submissions. But where lucrative views are greatly predominant, a truly respectable man is seldom found. Covetousness is so greedy a passion, that it not only attracts to itself its proper objects, but swallows up almost every other affection. Man indeed is naturally and properly attached to himself in a certain degree; but a liberal education, united to a good nature, corrects the excess of selfishness, and enables us to find enjoyment in many pursuits, which are conducive to the good of society. But when all is made to centre in self, and when the mind is so contracted as to see no good but lucre, it brings its proper punishment, by a voluntary condemnation of itself, to a slavish, a timid, and an anxious existence. So that the contemptible characters which I have been describing are, in truth, enemies to self, even when they are exclusively devoted to it.

There are others who adopt the pusillanimity of mean compliance and servile assent, from a wish to pass quietly and smoothly through life without the asperities or noise of opposition. This wish, however amiable and laudable, may certainly lead to excessive and unmanly obsequiousness. Every man is bound by his religion, and by his regard to himself, his family, and his country, to seek peace. But it will not be secured by unmanly submissions. A proper degree of spirit and courage is as necessary to preserve tranquillity as a pacific disposition. Internal peace is infinitely more valuable than external; but he who is always afraid to avow his sentiments, and is led into the mazes of deceit and duplicity, will feel, amid his fears and his contrivances, that his bosom is agitated with emotions by no means tranquil and serene. Add to this, that the spiritless servility of a mean but fashionable time-server, will often invite insult, as it will deserve contempt.

In truth, every sensible man forms opinions on every thing which presents itself, and every honest man dares to avow them, when there is no evident and honourable reason for their concealment. If a man has formed virtuous, religious, and patriotic principles, he injures all those

those causes which he must wish to serve, by fearing to declare openly, on proper occasions, his inward conviction. It is indeed his duty to do so; for it is a part of virtue to add confidence to the virtuous, by professing a wish to be esteemed of the number.

But that wisdom, which consists in political compliance, without regard to the antiquated notions of moral fitness or unfitness, is no less visible in public than in private life. It is not always the honest and upright man, whose heart is as open as his countenance, who is judged worthy of great offices and employments. It is more frequently the varnished character, which, while it holds out the best professions, is capable of co-operating in all the mean artifices, which are often, according to the narrow system of wordly politics, politically necessary. In the employments of state, he, who cannot meanly submit to time-serving, will not often be able to serve himself, or permitted to serve his country.

In public measures, particularly those which concern religion for instance, it is insinuated, that not what is strictly and morally right, or strictly and morally wrong, is to be considered so much, as what is seasonable, what the times and the present system of manners will conveniently bear. At one time, popery is to be encouraged; because we are threatened with an invasion, and the papists are a numerous and rich body, capable of greatly assisting us as friends, or annoying us as enemies. At another time, popery is to be discountenanced by writings, by laws, by axes, and by faggots. At one time, Christianity is to be propagated by missionaries wherever we make a discovery; at another we are to visit and revisit the isles of the Southern ocean, and not a wish be expressed by the rulers civil or ecclesiastical, for the conversion of the poor Otaheiteans and Ulieteans. At one time, ecclesiastics shall rule the nation; and at another, not be permitted to share the least authority. The times will not bear ecclesiastical interference, and therefore the spiritual lords shall be and hear the insults of a graceless peer, or see laws enacted which affect the protestant religion, or the general state of national manners and ecclesiastical establishments.

blishments, in silent acquiescence, as if they were the novices of a Pythagoras, instead of men commissioned by the awful sanction of Jesus Christ and the laws of their country. They content themselves with the practice of moderation; but there are circumstances, in which forbearance becomes treachery and cowardice. They urge that the times will not bear ecclesiastical authority. Now who is it, who makes the times what they are? Even those, whose excessive caution and cowardly policy leave a doubt on the minds of the many, whether that zeal is not totally deficient which is the genuine result of sincerity. If policy only regulates the conduct of the clergy, the poor sceptical laity will be inclined to suspect, that the noble system of the established religion is founded on that policy, which they see is the chief means used to support it. I have no doubt, but that both the civil and ecclesiastical departments of the state would flourish more, if that conduct were followed in their support, which shines openly in the eyes of mankind, as the result of truth and honesty, than when those petty tricks and that temporizing management are pursued, which lead the governed to despise the persons, and to disobey the authority, of the governor. Let legal authority openly dictate what is right, when measured by the great eternal standard of truth and justice, and then let legal power enforce the practice. The times would then be conformed to the rulers, and not the rulers, by a strange perversion, to the obliquity of the times.

NO. XIII. A PRUDENT AND ELEGANT CHARACTER EXEMPLIFIED IN THE CHARACTER OF ATTICUS.

FEW among the ancient Romans have approached so nearly to a perfect character as Atticus. To the noblest instances of exalted wisdom and liberality, he added a peculiar elegance of life.

But his reputation has of late been sullied by detraction. The Abbé St. Real, in the wantonness of idle ingenuity, has attempted to derogate from his character, by disputing the veracity of his biographer, Cornelius Nepos. Unfortunately for St. Real, the principal passage he has quoted from Cicero to convict the historian of falsehood is manifestly corrupt, and, when restored to its obvious sense, proves nothing to the purpose, as is shewn by the elegant Melmoth in his agreeable remarks on Cicero's Essay on Old Age. The Abbé however, takes upon him to represent this amiable man as a time-server, and an artful politician, whose wisdom consisted in little else than a sagacious attention to his personal safety.

The penetrating Middleton has also spoken less favourably of the friend of Cicero, than might have been expected. He insinuates, that his Epicurean principles taught him a selfish caution, totally incompatible with the cordiality of friendship. To this prudent, though not very honourable self regard, he attributes it, that not one letter of Atticus was published, though not fewer than sixteen books of Cicero to Atticus have descended to posterity.

There is, it must be owned, on a slight review, a great appearance of insincerity in the conduct of Atticus. But St. Real has too hastily rejected the honourable testimony

mony which Nepos has borne in his favour; and Middleton seems to have been too much prejudiced against him, by a single passage of Seneca. Seneca asserted, that if Cicero had not drawn Atticus into notice, he would have remained unknown. This, however, may be true, without diminishing his merit. How could he have come down to posterity, but together with the fame of his illustrious friend; since he took not that active part in politics which gives men a place in the page of history, and erected no literary monument for the preservation of his own glory?

If, therefore, the character of his contemporary Cornelius Nepos is established as an historian, the fame of Atticus remains undiminished by the cavils of modern enquirers.

In answer to the aspersions, that Nepos was a mean writer, and was little regarded by his own age, it must be affirmed that he was, as we are told by Gellius, the familiar friend of Cicero. It is said also, that a statue was erected to him by his countrymen of Verona. If there are defects in any of the writings that pass under his name, they are attributed to the interpolations of Æmilius Probus. His Atticus is allowed to be his own, and a masterpiece of sweet and polished composition. Cicero speaks highly of him, and he is particularly honoured by Catullus and both the Plinies. He lived at the same time with Atticus, and, had he asserted any notorious untruths, would soon have been refuted by the general voice of living witnesses, who are seldom disposed to be rashly credulous to the voice of praise.

But, setting aside authority, it may be said, that the uncontroverted matter of fact, the intimate connection of Atticus with opposite parties, with Cæsar and with Pompey, with Antony and with Brutus, with Cicero, Clodius, and Hortensius, is a proof of uncommon management, or duplicity. From this fact, however, I would deduce a different inference. His friendship with the greatest men of his times, whatever were their political divisions, does honour both to his moderation and integrity. Had he concerned himself with faction, no
cunning

cunning could have secured him from the hatred of some of the parties, and a subsequent prescription. Had he been mean, base, artful, he would have been unanimously despised by all. They who differed in every thing else, would have agreed in exposing one whose villany deserved contempt, and whose influence was not great enough to justify connivance. The truth seems to be, that he was superior to the little views of party. His general philanthropy was stronger than his particular attachments, and in his warm regard for the excellence of his friends, he overlooked the failings that caused their animosity. Though he lived at a distance from the capital, and chose not to exert his influence, if he possessed any, yet such was his personal dignity, that, in his intercourse with Cicero and the greatest men of his times, he never appeared in the light of an inferior. They seem indeed to have treated him with unusual deference, and he appears to have possessed that true dignity, which results from real wisdom and virtue, and which no artifice or external ostentation can produce.

That he cultivated a friendship with them, and did them every good office which humanity directed by judgment could suggest, is true. But we have it on record, that he courted not the fortunate alone. To those who wanted his assistance, and were least likely to repay it, he was most ready to afford it. He protected the wife and family of Antony when reduced to ruin, and he transmitted pecuniary presents to Brutus, when Brutus was involved in the distresses of indigence.

Devoted to letters, and to all the studies that refine and elevate the liberal mind, he was idolized at Athens, where he found a sweet asylum from the tumult of faction. His situation in this place was truly enviable. In the centre of taste and learning, with a discernment that enabled him to select and relish the best productions, beloved by all around, and even courted by the great, he spent his time at Athens, in all the elegant tranquillity of the refined Epicurus. His departure from it was publicly lamented, and the regret of the discerning people reflects an honour on him, far greater than an ovation.

Though

Though a man of taste, of letters, of important connections, he was yet enabled to give attention to domestic œconomy. His family regulations were peculiar indeed, but such as became a philosopher. All his servants were qualified to read to him, and to perform the office of an amanuensis. He was elegant, says Nepos, not magnificent; splendid, not profuse. The unaffected beauty of delicate neatness was his object, rather than the ostentation of opulence.

A very distinguished and honourable part of his character was his utter detestation of deceit. He abhorred a lie. A circumstance which renders the charge of duplicity improbable. That he appeared little affected with his friend Cicero's misfortunes, is not so much to be attributed to insincerity, as to some conduct apparently weak in Cicero himself. And perhaps Cicero complained of it without sufficient reason; for adversity is querulous.

The goodness of his disposition was displayed in the constancy of his attachments, and in the delight he felt in acts of beneficence; but it shone no where more amiably than in his behaviour as a son and a brother. His mother lived to the age of ninety; and he used to mention with pleasure, that the harmony which subsisted between them was never interrupted by one moment's disagreement. He gloried also in living on the most affectionate terms with his sister.

He died in a good old age. But it is to be lamented, that, after a long life, as perfect as reason unassisted could render it, he precipitated his death by refusing sustenance, in order to avoid the recurrence of a painful disease. He acted consistently with the principles of Epicurus, who taught that pain was the greatest evil. A mind like his would have been the first to have resisted such errors, had he lived in a later age, and been the disciple of a greater than Epicurus.

Delineated by the pencil of Cornelius Nepos, he shines forth a beautiful portrait. Nor can I discover the utility of those minute enquiries, which tend to lower an elevated character. The more examples of human excellence, the more honourable and advantageous to human

man nature. Truth, indeed, in all cases should be carefully investigated; but when it already appears established on the side of virtue, that restlessness of learned research, which seeks to sap its foundations, is not only impertinent, but criminal.

NO. XIV. ON NOVEL READING.

IF it be true, that the present age is more corrupt than the preceding, the great multiplication of Novels has probably contributed to its degeneracy. Fifty years ago there was scarcely a Novel in the kingdom. Romances, indeed, abounded; but they, it is supposed, were rather favourable to virtue. Their pictures of human nature were not indeed exact, but they were flattering resemblances. By exhibiting patterns of perfection, they stimulated emulation to aim at it. They led the fancy through a beautiful wilderness of delights, and they filled the heart with pure, manly, bold, and liberal sentiments.

Those books also, which were written with a view to ridicule the more absurd romantic writers, are themselves most pleasing romances, and may be read without injury to the morals. Such is the immortal work of Cervantes. Perhaps the safest books of entertainment for young people are those of decent humour, which excite a laugh, and leave the heart little affected.

Books are more read in youth than in the advanced periods of life; but there are few perfectly well adapted to the young mind. They should be entertaining, or they will not be attended to. They should not be profound, for they will not be understood. Entertaining books there are in great numbers; but they were not written solely for young people, and are therefore too unguarded in many of their representations. They do not pay that reverence which Juvenal asserts to be due to the puerile age.

That Richardson's Novels are written with the purest intentions of promoting virtue, none can deny. But in the accomplishment of this purpose scenes are laid open, which it would be safer to conceal, and sentiments excited, which it would be more advantageous to early virtue not to admit. Dangers and temptations are pointed out; but many of them are dangers which seldom occur, and temptations by which few in comparison are assaulted. It is to be feared, the moral view is rarely regarded by youthful and inexperienced readers, who naturally pay the chief attention to the lively description of love, and its effects; and who, while they read, eagerly wish to be actors in the scenes which they admire.

The cultivated genius of Fielding entitles him to a high rank among the classics. His works exhibit a series of pictures drawn with all the descriptive fidelity of a Hogarth. They are highly entertaining, and will always be read with pleasure; but they likewise disclose scenes, which may corrupt a mind unseasoned by experience.

Smollet undoubtedly possessed great merit. He would, however, have been more generally read among the polite and refined, if his humour had been less coarse. His *Peregrine Pickle* has, I am convinced, done much mischief; as all books must do, in which wicked characters are painted in captivating colours. It is certainly advisable to defer the perusal of his works, till the judgment is mature.

The writings of such men do, however, display the beauties of that genius, which allures and rewards the attention of the discreet reader. But the memoirs, private histories, and curious anecdotes, imported from our neighbouring land of libertinism, have seldom any thing to recommend them to perusal but their profligacy. Yet even these, adorned with specious titles, and a pert vivacity of language, have found their way to the circulating libraries, and are often obtruded on the attention at an early age.

The English press has teemed with similar original productions. That coarse taste, which was introduced in the reign of Charles the second, was greedily adopted by the juvenile reader. At an inflammatory age, the fuel of licentious ideas will always find a ready reception.

The

The sentimental manner seems of late to have supplanted it. But it is matter of doubt, whether even this manner is not equally dangerous. It has given an amiable name to vice, and has obliquely excused the extravagance of the passions, by representing them as the effect of lovely sensibility. The least refined affections of humanity have lost their indelicate nature, in the ideas of many, when dignified by the epithet of sentimental; and transgressions forbidden by the laws of God and man, have been absurdly palliated, as proceeding from an excess of those finer feelings, which vanity has arrogated to herself as elegant and amiable distinctions. A softened appellation has given a degree of gracefulness to moral deformity.

The languishing and affectedly sentimental compositions formed on the pattern of Sterne, or of other less original Novellists, not only tend to give the mind a degree of weakness, which renders it unable to resist the slightest impulse of libidinous passion, but also indirectly insinuate, that the attempt is unnatural. What then remains to support the feeble efforts of remaining virtue, but the absence of temptation?

Such books, however pernicious their tendency, are the most easily obtained. The prudence of their publishers suggests the expediency of making them conveniently portable. Every corner of the kingdom is abundantly supplied with them. In vain is youth secluded from the corruptions of the living world. Books are commonly allowed them with little restriction, as innocent amusements; yet these often pollute the heart in the recesses of the closet, inflame the passions at a distance from temptation, and teach all the malignity of vice in solitude.

There is another evil arising from a too early attention to Novels. They fix attention so deeply, and afford so lively a pleasure, that the mind once accustomed to them cannot submit to the painful task of serious study. Authentic history becomes insipid. The reserved graces of the chaste matron Truth, are suffered to pass unobserved, amidst the gaudy and painted decorations of meretricious fiction. The boy who can procure a variety of books like Gill Blas, and the Devil upon Two Sticks, will no longer find entertainment in his Livy, his Sallust, his

Homer, or his Virgil. He will not study old Lilly, while he can read Pamela and Tom Jones, and a thousand inferior and more dangerous novels, which are easily procured in every town throughout this kingdom.

When the judgment is ripened by reflection, and the morals out of danger, every well-written book will claim attention. The man of application may always find agreeable refreshment, after severer study, in the amusing pages of a Fielding; but the fungous production of the common Novel-wright will be too insignificant to attract his notice.

The extreme insipidity of some of our later Novels, it might have been supposed, would have prevented their reception. But insipid minds find in them entertainment congenial to their nature. And, indeed, the futility of the modern Novel almost precludes its power of causing any other mischief, than the consumption of time that might be more usefully employed.

If, however, Novels are to be prohibited, in what, it will be asked, can the young mind employ itself during the hours of necessary leisure? To this it may be answered, that when the sweetened poison is removed, plain and wholesome food will always be relished. The growing mind will crave nourishment, and will gladly seek it in true histories, written in a pleasing and easy style, on purpose for its use. Voyages and travels, when not obscured by scientific observations, are always delightful to youthful curiosity. From interesting narratives, like those of Telemachus, and Robinson Crusoe, a mind not vitiated by a taste for licentious Novels will derive a very sensible pleasure. Let the boy's library consist of such books as Rollin's History, Plutarch's Lives, and the Spectators; and, together with the improvement of his morals and understanding, which he must derive from reading them, he will have it in his power to spend his vacant time in such mental amusement, as are truly and permanently delightful.

No. XV. ON SIMPLICITY OF STYLE IN
PROSAIC COMPOSITION.

FOOD that gives the liveliest pleasure on the first taste, frequently disgusts on repetition; and those things which please the palate without satiety, are such as please but moderately, and perhaps originally caused a disagreeable sensation. Mental food is also found by experience to nourish most, and delight the longest, when it is not lasciviously sweet. Profuse ornament and unnecessary graces, though they may transport the reader on a first perusal, commonly occasion a kind of intellectual surfeit, which prevents a second.

Immoderate embellishment is the mark of a puerile taste, of a weak judgment, and a little genius. It conveys the idea of too great a labour to please; an idea, which excludes the appearance of ease, without which it is difficult to effect the purpose of pleasing. If the reader enters into the author's spirit, he finds his emotions too rapidly excited to be consistent with pleasurable feelings. Works acknowledged to be written with true taste, are found for the most part to raise gentle emotions; and, when it is necessary to excite the more violent, the effect is improved from the rarity of the attempt. There is a certain equable flow of spirits, which keeps the mind in a tone for the admission of durable pleasure; but which, when hurried or exalted beyond its natural state, terminates in disgust.

Several books very popular in the present age, among the youthful and the inexperienced, have a sweetness that pains on the taste, and a grandeur that swells to a bloated turpitude. Such are the writings of some modern Germans. The Death of Abel is generally read, and preferred by many to all the productions of Greece, Rome, and England. The success of this work has given rise to others of the same plan, inferior to this in its real merits, and labouring under the same fault of redundant decoration. What

other

others may feel, I know not; but I would no more be obliged to read the works of Gesner repeatedly, than to make a frequent meal on the honey-comb.

The Meditations of Hervey, and many books of devotion, are written in that inflated style, which wearies by its constant efforts to elevate the mind to extacy. They have, it is true, an useful effect on the rude and uncultivated, whose understandings are seldom penetrated but by forcible impressions; but the pleasure they give is not sufficiently elegant and refined to attach the more polished reader who possesses taste.

Poetical prose, as all such writings may be called, seems indeed by no means correspondent to classical ideas of beauty. There is no model of it among writers in the golden ages, and it has seldom been attempted by the first rank of moderns. Fenelon indeed succeeded in it, but he richly intermixed the beautiful flowers originally culled by Homer and Virgil. Genius like his, assisted by classical learning, may give a grace to compositions formed on plans not quite conformable to the most approved archetype.

Many modern sermons, while their authors aimed at sublimity and a highly figurative eloquence, have become turgid and affected. The simple majesty of the sacred writings affords a proper model for sacred oratory; and it must be owned, to the honour of the regular clergy, that they have commonly imitated it; and that the enthusiastic and pompous harangue has usually been the production of those who have renounced reason in matters of taste as well as of religion. Addressed to the meanest capacities in the lowest orders, it may have produced a desirable effect in compelling their attention, and in warming their inflammable passions. But, it is to be feared, its effect was but temporary, and it is certain that it can never possess a place among the elegant works of literature.

It is agreeable to the mind to be occasionally roused by a powerful stroke; but it suffers a kind of smart, from a continual repetition of the blow. It is merely wearied by the feeble yet uninterrupted attacks of the unskilful writer, who mistakes the itch of scribbling for the impulse of genius.

The Bible, the Iliad, and Shakespeare's works, are allowed to be the sublimest books that the world can exhibit. They are also truly simple; and the reader is the more affected by their indisputable sublimity, because his attention is not fatigued with ineffectual attempts to attain it. He who is acquainted with Longinus will remember, that the instances adduced by that great pattern of the excellence he describes, are not remarkable for a glaring or a pompous style, but derive their claim to sublimity from a noble energy of thought, modestly decorated by a proper and natural expression.

No author has been more universally approved than Xenophon. Yet his writings display no appearance of splendour or majesty; nothing elevated or adorned with figures; no affectation of superfluous ornament. His merit is an unaffected sweetness, which no affectation can obtain. The graces seem to have conspired to form the becoming texture of his composition. And yet, perhaps, a common reader would neglect him, because the easy and natural air of his narrative rouses no violent emotion. More refined understandings peruse him with delight; and Cicero has recorded that Scipio, when once he had opened the books of Xenophon, would with difficulty be prevailed with to close them. His style, says the same great orator and critic, is sweeter than honey, and the muses themselves seem to have spoken from his mouth.

Julius Caesar is thought to have resembled Xenophon in his style, as he did in the circumstance of profession. He has nothing florid or grand, but, like a gentle river, flows on with a surface unruffled. A wonderful instance of moderation, to have recounted his own achievements with accuracy, yet without being, for a moment, betrayed into an unbecoming pomp either of diction or representation. Yet with all the gracefulness of modesty and simplicity, he has an air of grandeur that commands respect. In comparison with this majestic air, ostentatious ornament would have been contemptible deformity.

Cicero, who understood and valued the simplicity of Xenophon, was, however, himself sometimes guilty of its violation. He adopted the Asiatic manner in some

of his orations, and they are often more verbose, diffuse, and affected, than an Attic taste can patiently endure. But it is a kind of sacrilege, as well as presumption, to detract from the deserved glory of a man, who in his life and writings advanced human nature to high perfection.

The French nation is an affected nation; but many of its authors have written with remarkable simplicity. Fontaine, among others, is acknowledged to have equalled, in this beauty, the ancient models. But they have writers of the other kind, and I must own, I never could admire many of their boasted orators. Even their Bossue, their Bourdaloue, and their Massillon, are not adapted to the taste of an English or an Attic audience.

Simplicity is not in general the distinguishing beauty of English writers. Their spirit, their dignity, and their seriousness of disposition have sometimes given their writings an ill-placed pomp and a false magnificence. But the works of an Addison and a Sterne, and the reception they have met with, will vindicate the nation from the charge of wanting taste for simple beauty. The ancients have been much imitated in England; and where this is the case, a taste for simplicity will of necessity supersede the remains of gothicism. The German manner, if we may judge of it from translations, it is hoped, will never supplant the Attic.

To write in a plain style appears easy in theory; but how few in comparison have avoided the fault of unnecessary and false ornament! The greater part seem to have mistaken unwieldy corpulence for robust vigour, and to have despised the temperate habit of sound health as meagreness. The taste for finery is more general than for symmetrical beauty and chaste elegance; and many, like Nero, would not be content till they should have spoiled, by gilding it, the statue of a Lysippus.

No. XVI. ON THE PREVALENCE OF RELIGIOUS SCEPTICISM.

OF all the methods which the vanity of man has devised with a view to acquire distinction, there is none easier than that of professing a disbelief of the established religion. That which shocks the feelings of those with whom we converse, cannot fail of attracting notice; and, as the vain are usually confident, they utter their doubts with an air so oracular and decisive as induces the simple to think them profoundly wise. Audacity, with little ingenuity, will attract the eyes of spectators, and this will sufficiently answer the purpose of many among the professed unbelievers. One might be diverted, if one were not hurt at seeing a circle of silly admirers gaping and fixing their eyes on some half learned and impudent prater, who throws out oblique insinuations against the Bible, the clergy, or the sacrament. These are fertile topics of wit and ingenuity, but it might mortify the vanity of some very wise writers and talkers, if they were to recollect, what is undoubtedly true, that it is a species of wit and ingenuity, which not only the vilest, but the most stupid and illiterate of mankind, have frequently displayed in all its possible perfection.

There is, indeed, no doubt but that vanity is one of the principal causes of infidelity. It must be the cause of communicating it to others by writing or conversation. For let us suppose the case of a very humane, judicious, and learned man, entertaining doubts of the truth of Christianity: if he cannot clear his doubts by examination, he will yet recollect that his doubts are no certainties; and, before he endeavours to propagate his scepticism, he will ask himself these questions: Am I quite convinced, that what I doubt cannot possibly be true? If I am convinced of it, am I sure, that the publication of my opinions will not do more harm than good? Is not the disturbing of a long

long-established civil constitution attended with confusion, rebellion, bloodshed, and ruin? And are not the majority of men more strongly attached to the religion than the government of their forefathers? Will it serve my country to introduce discontent of any species? May not those innovations in religion, which discontent may introduce, lead to all the evils which are caused by frenzy and fanaticism? Granting that I were able to make a party formidable enough to crush opposition, and to exterminate Christianity, still am I certain that I act, in this instance, like a good member of society? For is not this system, whether well or ill founded, friendly to society? I must confess it; its greatest enemies have acknowledged it. What motive then can induce me to divulge my doubts of its authenticity? Not the good of mankind; for it is already allowed by unbelievers, that the good of mankind is interested in the belief of its divine original. Is it for my own good, and with a view to be convinced? I will not deceive myself: my motive, I suspect, is of another kind; for do I read those books, which have been already written to satisfy similar doubts? Nothing but the vanity of appearing to be wiser than my credulous neighbours can induce me to interrupt the happiness of their belief. But vanity of this sort, which tends to disturb society, to injure the national morals, and to rob many thousand individuals of a copious source of sweet and solid comfort must be pronounced extreme wickedness, even according to the obvious dictates of natural religion. I shall act the part of a good citizen and a good man, by conforming to a system whose beneficial influence I feel and confess; and by endeavouring to acquire a belief in that which has, for so many centuries, been established, and which promises to sooth me in distress with the sweetest consolations, and to brighten the dismal hour of death, by the hope of a more glorious and happy state of existence. At all events, I shall have the satisfaction of having commanded myself so far, as not to have run the hazard of endangering the welfare of my fellow-creatures, either here or hereafter, by indulging a degree of vanity, which, in a creature so

weak and so short-lived as myself, is a folly very inconsistent with the superior wisdom which I seem to arrogate.

I will venture to repeat, that all writers against Christianity, however they may affect even the extremes of benevolence, honour, philosophy, and enlargement of mind, are actuated by vanity and wickedness of heart. Their motives are as mean, selfish, narrow, and in every respect unjustifiable, as the tendency of their writings is mischievous. Their malice is often impotent, through the foolish sophistry of their arguments; but, if ever it be successful, it is highly injurious: and, indeed, considering their motives, and the probable consequences of their endeavours, the infidel writer is a greater enemy to society, and consequently guiltier, according to all the principles of social union, than the thief or the traitor. Persecution would, however, only promote his cause, and his proper punishment is contempt.

It is certainly no derogation from the character of a man of sense to conform, even while he is so unfortunate as to doubt their truth, to the opinions of his country. His conformity will probably lead him to a train of actions and of thought, which, in due time, will induce him to believe. But, if that should not happen, yet he will act, as very wise and very great men have acted, in paying a respectful deference to the avowed conviction of others. The most intelligent and powerful men of ancient Rome, not only appeared to believe a very absurd and hurtful system, but assisted in all its ceremonies as priests. Even Socrates, who evidently entertained some notions adequate to the dignity of the one great and supreme Being, yet thought it was a duty which he owed to his country, so far to conform to the wretched establishment, as to order, in his dying words, a sacrifice to *Æsculapius*. This external conformity to the national religion ought not to be confounded with hypocrisy. If indeed it is carried to extremes, or zealously affected, it certainly is very blameable and contemptible deceit; but while it keeps within the bounds of reason and moderation, it ought to be called a decent deference to the opinions of the majority arising from humility, and from a desire to maintain the tranquillity.

quillity of the state, and to continue an innocent and useful system, which has and will always greatly contribute to lessen the quantity and degree both of moral and of natural evil.

The easiest, after all, or at least the most effectual method of appearing in any character, is really to be what we wish to appear. But belief, you will say, is not in our power, and how can we believe what appears to us incredible? Certainly you cannot, while it appears incredible. But let me ask you, whether you have taken any pains to believe, or have at once and at a glance persuaded yourself, that the Christian religion is totally false? I am of opinion, that a great number of sceptical writers never gave themselves the trouble to read those scriptures, which they warmly oppose. They hear objections, they read objections, and they find that from men of reputed wit and ingenuity the objections often originate. They also wish to be reputed men of wit and ingenuity, and therefore eagerly adopt the language and sentiments of the order. Perhaps the vanity and pride of this class of men will render all attempts to convince them abortive; but to modest doubters, and to those whose good sense and good dispositions lead them to wish to adopt the religion of their country, it may not be useless to suggest advice, with a view to facilitate their conviction.

The chief thing required is to free themselves from the pride of human reason. Humility (and surely our blindness and imperfections are sufficient to render us humble, if we would be reasonable), humility will open our hearts, and belief will find admission. Sincere endeavours, seconded by prayers, will never fail to help our unbelief. But, alas! a fine, gay, spirited, liberal, and enlarged modern philosopher would be ashamed to be found on his knees, or with a Testament in his possession. There is scarcely any vicious act, or any vicious book, which would put him so much to the blush.

A modest well-meaning man might, however, I should think, divest himself of those prejudices which

prevent the possibility of belief, by the following soliloquy: " I find myself placed in a world abounding with evil and misery. Under the immediate pressure of it, I feel my heart inclining, like the needle to the north, by its natural tendency, to the Deity for support. Man, of all animals, is the only one who has the sense of religion. Feeling this distinctive propensity of my nature, I look around to discover to what object, and in what manner, that part of my fellow-creatures, who live in the same society with myself, pay their adoration. I find a system of religion already established, and which has been established, in the most enlightened countries of the earth, near two thousand years. I resolve to examine it. It claims that respect from its antiquity and universality. Many difficulties appear on the first inspection. My reason is often startled, and my belief wavers. But I will not yet give up a point of so serious importance, without further and closer attention to it. I reflect, that two thousand years is a vast space in the age of the world. How many myriads of men like myself have lived and died in the faith during that time! And were all of them fools or hypocrites? It could not have been. Can the understanding of a poor individual just come into the world, and hardly knowing where he is, comprehend on intuition an object of such magnitude, and make the mighty discovery, which has escaped millions of the wisest and most learned of mortals? Or, supposing that they all perceived the deception, am I then at last the only honest man who will confess it? I am ashamed to avow such an idea to myself. But yet, if I reject what they received, surely I avow it in the more expressive language of my conduct. Pride, I fear, is the foundation of my scepticism; and humility must form the basis of my belief. I will check my own presumption, and reject the cavils of vain and foolish philosophy. Shall a poor weak creature, who cometh up like a flower, and is cut down, who fleeth as a shadow, and never continueth in one stay, presume to pronounce decisively in that little period,

“ in which he has scarcely time to look about him
 “ before he dies, against a system, which has strong
 “ internal and external evidence of divine original,
 “ which is most useful and comfortable, and which has
 “ been admitted among a great portion of mankind
 “ during almost twenty centuries. No, it is the first
 “ wisdom to be humble. Humility will be followed
 “ by grace, and grace by faith, and faith by salvation.
 “ It plainly appears, that I can lose nothing by belief,
 “ but some of those excessive and irregular enjoyments,
 “ which would destroy my health and life ; but I may
 “ possibly gain a glory and a happiness, which shall
 “ continue to all eternity.”

NO. XVII. FAMILY DISAGREEMENTS THE
 FREQUENT CAUSE OF IMMORAL CONDUCT.

AFTER all our complaints of the uncertainty of human affairs, it is undoubtedly true, that more misery is produced among us by the irregularities of our tempers, than by real misfortunes.

And it is a circumstance particularly unhappy, that these irregularities of the temper are most apt to display themselves at our fire-sides, where every thing ought to be tranquil and serene. But the truth is, we are awed by the presence of strangers, and are afraid of appearing weak or ill-natured when we act in the sight of the world ; and so, very heroically, reserve all our ill-humour for our wives, children, and servants. We are meek where we might meet with opposition, but feel ourselves undauntedly bold where we are sure of no effectual resistance.

The perversion of the best things converts them to the worst. Home is certainly well adapted to repose and solid enjoyment. Among parents and brothers, and all the tender charities of private life, the gentler affections, which are always attended with feelings purely and permanently pleasurable, find an ample scope

for proper exertion. The experienced have often declared, after wearying themselves in pursuing phantoms, that they have found a substantial happiness in the domestic circle. Hither they have returned from their wild excursions in the regions of dissipation; as the bird, after fluttering in the air, descends into her nest, to partake and to increase its genial warmth with her young ones.

Such and so sweet are the comforts of home, when it is not perverted by the folly and weakness of man. Indifference, and a carelessness on the subject of pleasing those whom it is our best interest to please, often render it a scene of dulness and insipidity. Happy is the evil extended no farther. But the transition from the negative state of not being pleased, to positive ill-humour, is but too easy. Fretfulness and peevishness arise, as nettles vegetate, spontaneously, where no salutary plants are cultivated. One unkind expression infallibly generates many others. Trifles light as air are able to kindle the blaze of contention. By frequent conflicts and unreserved familiarity, all that mutual respect which is necessary to preserve love, even in the most intimate connections, is entirely lost, and the faint affection which remains is too feeble, to be felt amid the furious operation of the hateful passions. Farewell peace and tranquillity, and cheerful converse, and all the boasted comforts of the family circle. The net which should preserve a perpetual warmth by the constancy of paternal and conjugal affection, is rendered cold and joyless. In the place of the soft down which should cover it, are substituted thorns and briars. The waters of strife, to make use of the beautiful allusion of Scripture, rush in with impetuous violence, and ruffe and discolour that stream, which, in its natural and undisturbed current, devolves its waters all smooth and limpid.

But it is not necessary to expatiate on the misery of family dissention. I mean more particularly to suggest that family dissention, besides all its own immediate evils, is the fruitful parent of moral misconduct.

When the several parts which compose a family find themselves uneasy in that home which is naturally the

seat of mutual enjoyment, they are tempted from the straight road of common prudence, to pursue their happiness through a devious wild of passion and imagination. The son, arrived at years of maturity, who is treated harshly at home, will seldom spend his evenings at the domestic fire-side. If he lives in the metropolis, he will fly for refuge to the places of public diversion. There, it is very probable, some unhappy connection will be formed, which cannot be continued without a plentiful supply of money. Money, it is probable, cannot be procured honestly but from the parent; but money must at all events be procured. What then remains, but to pursue those methods which unprincipled ingenuity has invented, and which, sooner or later, lead to their proper punishments, pain, shame, and death?

But though the consequences are not always such as the operation of human laws produces, yet they are always terrible, and destructive of happiness and virtue. Misery is indeed the necessary result of all deviation from rectitude; but early debauchery, early disease, early profligacy of all kinds, are peculiarly fruitful of wretchedness; as they sow the seeds of misery in the spring of life, when all that is sown strikes deep root, and buds and blossoms, and brings forth fruit in profuse abundance.

In the disagreements between children and parents, it is certain that the children are usually most culpable. Their violent passions and defective experience render them disobedient and undutiful. Their love of pleasure operates so violently, as often to destroy the force of filial affection. A parent is stung to the heart by the ingratitude of a child. He checks his precipitancy, and perhaps with too little command of temper; for who can always hold the reins? Asperity produces asperity. But the child was the aggressor, and therefore deserves a great part of the misery which ensues. It is however, certain, that the parent is often imprudent, as well as the child undutiful. He should endeavour to render home agreeable by gentleness and reasonable indulgence: for man at every age seeks to be pleased, but more particularly at the juvenile age. He should indeed maintain his authority; but it should be like the mild dominion of a limited monarch, and not the iron

rule of an austere tyrant. If home is rendered pleasing, it will not long be deserted. The prodigal will soon return when his father's house is always ready to receive him with joy.

What is said of the consequences of domestic disunion to sons, is equally to be applied to daughters. Indeed, as the misconduct of daughters is more fatal to family peace, though perhaps not more heinous in a moral view, particular care should be taken to render them attached to the comforts of the family circle. When their home is disagreeable, they will be ready to make any exchange; and will often lose their characters, virtue, and happiness, in the pursuit of it. Indeed the female character and happiness are so easily injured, that no solicitude can be too great in their preservation. But prudence is necessary in every good cause, as well as zeal; and it is found by experience, that the gentlest method of government, if it is limited and directed by good sense, is the best. It ought indeed to be steady, but not rigid: and every pleasure which is innocent in itself and in its consequences, ought to be admitted, with a view to render less disagreeable that unwinking vigilance which a delicate and sensible father will judge necessary to be used in the care of a daughter.

To what wickedness, as well as wretchedness, matrimonial disagreements lead, every day's history will clearly inform us. When the husband is driven from his home by a termagant, he will seek enjoyment, which is denied him at his own home, in the haunts of vice, and in the riots of intemperance: nor can female corruption be wondered at, though it must be greatly pitied and regretted, when in the heart of a husband, which love and friendship should warm, hatred is found to rankle. Conjugal infelicity not only renders life most uncomfortable, but leads to that desperate dissoluteness and carelessness in manners, which terminates in the ruin of health, peace, and fortune. If we may form a judgment from the divorces and separations which happen in the gay world, we may conclude, that the present manners are highly unfavourable to conjugal felicity. And we see, consistently with my theory, that the consequence of these domestic disagreements is the prevalence

prevalence of vice in a very predominant degree, as well as of misery.

But it avails little to point out evils without recommending a remedy. One of the first rules which suggests itself is, that families should endeavour, by often and seriously reflecting on the subject, to convince themselves, that not only the enjoyment, but the virtue of every individual, greatly depends on a cordial union. When they are convinced of this, they will endeavour to promote it; and it fortunately happens, that the very wish and attempt of every individual must infallibly secure success. It may indeed be difficult to restrain the occasional sallies of temper; but where there is, in the more dispassionate moments, a settled desire to preserve domestic union, the transient violence of passion will not often produce a permanent rupture.

It is another most excellent rule, to avoid a *gross familiarity*, even where the connection is most intimate. The human heart is so constituted as to love respect. It would indeed be unnatural in very intimate friends to behave to each other with stiffness; but there is a delicacy of manner, and a flattering deference, which tends to preserve that degree of esteem which is necessary to support affection, and which is lost in contempt when it deviates into excessive familiarity. An habitual politeness of manners will prevent even indifference from degenerating to hatred. It will refine, exalt, and perpetuate affection.

But the best and most efficacious rule is, that we should not think our moral and religious duties are only to be practised in public, and in the sight of those from whose applause we expect the gratification of our vanity, ambition, or avarice; but that we should be equally attentive to our behaviour among those who can only repay us by reciprocal love. We must shew the sincerity of our principles and professions by acting consistently with them, not only in the senate, in the field, in the pulpit, at the bar, or in any public assembly, but at the *fire-side*.

No. XVIII. HINTS TO YOUNG MEN WHO ARE DESIGNED FOR ORDERS.

IT is no reproach to the church to say, that it is supplied with ministers by the emolument. Men must be supported; and if the prospect of gain is one principal motive in impelling them to enter the clerical office, it is a natural, a reasonable motive, and in no respect disgraceful. A son, it is true, destined to the church because his father or friend is patron of a living; or he is placed at a free-school, or is carried on to college with a view to a scholarship; or he fixes on the profession himself from a love of letters and tranquillity, and from the hope of gaining a quiet and easy, though small stipend, in a liberal and useful employment. There is nothing in all this unreasonable; and though hypocrisy and fanaticism may claim such motives, yet, if he who is actuated by them, the greater part certainly are, prepares himself duly to entrance on the office, and discharges its duties conscientiously when he is in it, he is a worthy and valuable citizen, and a better man than they who revile him.

But whatever causes may have inclined a young man to devote himself to the church, I will suppose him dismissed from his school, and will submit to his consideration a few remarks, which, I hope, will be useful. With respect to enthusiasts, I will not presume to direct them. They, indeed, are apt to suppose themselves guided by a superior illumination, to which they cannot confidently pretend.

To facilitate the tenure of some preferments, and satisfy the prejudices of the world, it will be necessary to take academical degrees. This cannot be done remarkably without becoming a member of an English university. If the finances of the student are inadequate to his independent support, he will probably be tempted to enter in one of them, for the sake of the emolument of a scholarship, fellowship, or exhibitions. If, indeed,

discipline, and a few regulations in the exercises, should take place, he will do right to fix his residence in the venerable seats of learning, where every convenience for the purposes of study is liberally afforded.

But if neither the discipline nor the statutes are altered, I would advise him, barely to keep two terms a year for several years, which may be annually done by him in the space of five or six weeks only, so as, in due time, to derive as good a right, by the statutes, as any other members, to the honours bestowed by an university convocation. In Oxford, for instance, three weeks spent at Easter, and a fortnight in Aet term, are the seasons which I recommend. This excursion may furnish an agreeable variety, and the time may be well spent in examining the public libraries, and in attending the public lecturers, who contrive to circumscribe their courses within the limits of the few weeks required by the statute to keep a term. With respect to a voluntary residence at either university during six or eight months at a time, though certainly right, if a reformation should take place, I consider it, in their present state, as dangerous, expensive, and attended with no advantage great enough to compensate the disadvantage, and which may not be enjoyed abundantly better in the family of a worthy and learned clergyman in a country village. By all means let the long intervals be employed in study, for which the silence of a village retreat, if a sufficient number of books are to be procured, is far better accommodated than the society of noisy young men, who are suffered to do as they please by night and by day; who are above controul; and who cause the college to resemble the tavern and the brothel. I have no cause to express myself with resentment on the subject of the universities. I say what I think, and I say it because it would ill become me to conceal any thing, in the knowledge of which ingenuous youth is greatly interested.

If a young man is fortunate enough to find a worthy clergyman who will be his companion and instructor from nineteen to twenty-three, he will direct the course of studies and superintend the moral conduct. But as I know that all will not be able to find such an one, and that the greater part cannot, from the slenderness of their

their fortunes, make such a compensation as might probably be required by him, when found, I shall proceed to offer my advice.

At the age of one-and-twenty, it will be proper to begin the studies, more immediately preparatory to ordination. If it is possible, a young man of similar views and intentions should be procured as an associate. I say then, that, without any tutor, by the direction of books, they may thus, with due application, make at least as great an improvement in this retreat, as they could in any university. In these circumstances, they would be less exposed to dissipation; and, for that reason among others, they would be more attached to study, and would succeed in it better. To be initiated in the gross debauchery of a corrupt university, is a bad preparation for the sacred office.

Such would be my plan till the universities should be reformed. But since many reasons will concur to induce parents to send their sons to the universities as usual, such as the expectation of various pecuniary advantages, the opportunities of forming connections, the fear of singularity, and indeed the difficulty of deviating from the accustomed path, I will suppose a student just matriculated, and will submit to his opinion the following suggestions.

He is sent to college to improve his mind and morals, to become a good scholar, and a good man; not a man of pleasure, nor a man of fashion. Let him, then, resolve to pursue his studies indefatigably, and pray God Almighty to preserve his innocence, and to be a guardian to him, now he is removed from the fostering wing of an affectionate parent. Let him beware of being overcome by ridicule, by which he will certainly be attacked. Let him be steady in his principles, and spirited in his actions; exhibiting that vivacity and resolution in his good purposes which others display in their bad ones. Let him recollect, that he is preparing for a sacred office, and study to render his conduct consistent with his views. But, with all his virtues and all his prudence, let him avoid the appearance of unnecessary stiffness, of hypocrisy, or of more singularity than is required for the preservation of his principles. Let him also most carefully avoid a censorious disposition. It

his business to advance his own good qualities to all attainable perfection; not to be morose, or calumnious on the defects and faults of others. He will see, pity, and avoid them; but he will leave the office of correction to those who ought to assume it.

The foolish exercises performed in the public schools are too ridiculous to deserve a serious censure: but as his degree may be denied him, if he fails in any particular of this formal trifling, he must give them, and the studies which are connected with them, so much attention as will qualify him to perform them with facility and confidence. The classics in general, the Hebrew language, and the books introductory to divinity, will have a better claim to his serious application.

The preparatory improvements should not be confined to that moderate degree of excellence which may be required in a chaplain's examination. They who aim only at passing an examination, usually relinquish their studies when the examination is past. With a good character, moderate attainments, and those recommendatory testimonies which are easily procured, there is no danger of rejection. But he who deserves to succeed, will not be satisfied without making a solid improvement in useful theology.

A young clergyman, if he wishes to be esteemed by his parishioners, and to promote their welfare, must take particular care, on first entering on his cure, that he makes favourable impressions on the subject of his morals and his sincerity. However young, he must remember, that, by assuming the office of a public and religious instructor, he has assumed a grave character. If he is not reasonably grave, he may indeed be pardoned, or be pitied; but he will not be valued. I mean not that he should be austere, nor puritanical; but that he should avoid even the appearance of that disgustful levity of manners, and excessive profligacy, which has disgraced the younger clergy of the times. That real levity and real profligacy are to be avoided, I need not inform him; but at the same time I am sorry to be obliged to confess, that the serious part of mankind have long had just reason to express their displeasure at the frequent occurrence of the *professed clerical libertine*. He will avoid evil, and
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the appearance of evil. If he cannot bring his mind to sacrifice youthful follies to the dignity of his profession, he should not engage in it. The public have long been marked with indignation, that some of the most distinguished coxcombs, drunkards, debauchees, and gamesters, who shine at the watering-places, and in all public places but pulpits, are young men of the sacerdotal order.

They plead that they are young, and that youth ought to excuse the follies which result from the too ardent love of pleasure. But if they are young, they should remember that they thought themselves old enough to assume the office of instructors of mankind; and to warn their fellow-creatures to avoid those very irregularities which they not only practise, but in which they glory, as marks of spirit.

The clergyman who would be respected, and every clergyman would be respected if he would be useful, must preserve a decency of dress.

He must be affable; but his affability must be tempered with reserve.

He must be regular in the performance of parochial duty, and pay at least as much attention to the poor as to the rich.

He must read prayers, and preach, with fervency and earnestness; not as if he considered his business as a job by which he is to earn a certain pay, or as if he did not believe what he uttered. His eloquence will be forcible but not theatrical; pathetic, but not affected.

He must not be covetous, nor very rigid in exacting of the poor his just dues.

He must be benevolent and beneficent in an exemplary degree; winning men by persuasion, forgiving injuries, and teaching more forcibly by his life than his discourse.

He must not be a more constant attendant on law and courts than at church, a sycophant, a parasite, or a *professed preferment-hunter*; for we cannot esteem him who, while he recommends to us the pursuit of credit and glory in a better world, appears to fix his own on the charms of a mitre, and to love this world, as transient and transitory as he describes it, with peculiar attachment and constancy of affection.

NO. XIX. HINTS TO YOUNG MEN WHO
ARE DESIGNED FOR A MILITARY OR NAVAL
LIFE.

THE exigencies of the state have called for an increase of the military orders, and it must be owned that our British youth has not been slow to obey the summons; for there is scarcely a town or village in the kingdom where you will not meet, as you pass along, cockades, epaulettes, and scarlet coats, accompanied with fierce looks and struts *à la militaire*. The military spirit is indeed so widely diffused, that there is reason to believe the nation will shortly become a nation of warriors. But as the military spirit is rather adverse to the gentle arts of peace, and as the young heroes are apt to lay down their books as soon as they take up their arms, I will suggest to them a few hints, which may probably prevent their heroism from degenerating to brutality. I wish them not to imagine, that the moment they have put their hats on sideways, and dressed themselves at their toilettes in complete uniform, they are foldiers. They may be pretty figures, and, doubtless, will be able to do great execution at an assembly; but it does not follow that they will be equally successful on the plains of Saratoga.

Many, who enter on the profession while they are striplings, are apt to suppose, that a sword, a cockade, and a shoulder-labor, constitute them complete gentlemen. These, however, will not constitute them men, and much less gentlemen. An ignorant, rude, and mean mind under a fine red coat, is no less visible, and more contemptible, than if it appeared under rags, and the dress of a mechanic.

Almost all the professions have some characteristic manner, which the professors seem to adopt, with little examination, as necessary and as honourable distinctions. It happens unfortunately, that profligacy, libertinism, and
infidelity,

infidelity, are thought by weaker minds almost as necessary a part of a soldier's uniform as his shoulder knave. To hesitate at an oath, to decline intoxication, to profess a regard for religion, would be almost as ignominious as to refuse a challenge. Insolvency and disease, some of the greatest misfortunes which can befall a human creature, are often thought to add a grace to the military man. He dresses, he drinks, he blusters, he spends his money, he ruins his constitution and his peace; but the compensation for all this is, that he is a favourite of the ladies; and really in this his ultimate object he often succeeds; for too many of them, who are as weak as himself, are ready to run wild at the sight of a red coat. Age and ugliness, disease and rottenness, are all lost in the irresistible charms of a piece of scarlet broad-cloth; and many a young man, who has been repulsed in a common dress, has been arrayed by his tailor for the battle, and gained a complete victory. The cross-legged artist has often metamorphosed a Thersites into an Adonis. But this silly attachment of silly women tends immediately to increase that profligacy which has ever been the fertile source of female misery: and now, when you can hardly turn without seeing a military man, the evil must necessarily be increased, and consequently it is the most desirable to administer a remedy.

But here I will interrupt my remarks, to assure the reader; that the puerile vanity and studied profligacy which I have described, is only to be found in those who have been too early commissioned, and have entered on the soldier's life destitute of the gentleman's education. There are indeed many such; for parents who have interest, are desirous of entering their sons early, that they may arrive at an exalted post in the prime of manhood. Hence it happens, that the first which should be employed in a virtuous course of literary discipline, is thrown away amidst the dissipation of a camp, or a barrack, or a ship's crew; and the poor youth, though he is lifted over the heads of veterans, and assumes all the haughty airs of a great man, possesses a mind only distinguished from that of a drummer, or his boatswain, by superior insolence. He has no taste; his pleasures are gross; he is a dissipated

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guished brute indeed; but his distinction consists only in superior brutality; his conduct is caprice, and his courage insensibility. He lives a life of misery, varied only by the short gleams of vicious and infamous indulgences. Of such misery as this it is surely friendly to attempt the prevention. If the present generation may not profit by the suggestions which I offer, some at least in the succeeding one may be rescued from perdition. But, lest what I am compelled to say of the uneducated and unprincipled part of the profession should be extended too far, I must add, that I am well convinced that a great part of the army consists of men who have entered on the military profession from the best motives, and have carried into the camp the accomplishments of the school.

To the other part, whose misfortune it has been to be engaged in an unsettled life, without instruction in any of the valuable parts of science, without moral principles, or even the idea of religion, it may not be useless to address a few admonitions.

Let them endeavour to persuade themselves of the beauty, the value, and the pleasures of a cultivated mind. Let them compare one of their profession who possesses the graces of the understanding, with another of equal rank, whose ideas are low, whose sentiments are narrow and selfish, whose pleasures are gross, and who has no other method of employing his leisure but in drunkenness and debauchery. The contrast will exhibit the deformity which I am describing in striking colours. The one is respected and beloved; happy in himself, and the cause of happiness in others: the other, though he is always pursuing pleasure, never finds it pure and exalted; but spends a feverish being in vanity and vice, and precipitates that dissolution at which all but himself have reason to rejoice.

Now the leisure which this profession frequently enjoys above all others, as it is often the cause of vice, so it affords a fine opportunity for making improvement. But how shall the uncultivated soldier begin? He was taken from his school before he had laid any foundation on which he might build the fabric of learning. Where this is the case, we must not hope that he will be able to acquire the learned languages: but if he acquires

quires a taste for English books, he will soon find his nature improved by reading the best of them, like the wild flock from the wilderness, when grafted with a stem of a delicious and valuable fruit-tree.

In every profession there is a certain quantity of practical and technical knowledge, which ought to be particularly attended to, because the profession cannot be exercised without it. Tactics and fortification, with the sciences immediately connected with them, must be studied, as essentially necessary to the military and naval officer. But if he stops here, he will still retain the narrowness of an artist, who seeks no farther skill than is necessary to practise and to procure its lucrative advantages.

History, in all its parts, will very properly excite it will amply reward, the attention of the soldier. The translations of Thucydides, Polybius, Xenophon, Livy, Sallust, will amuse and instruct his mind with valuable knowledge, and in the end will give him more pleasure than a meagre novel borrowed at a circulating library. I would advise him to take with him Pope's *Homer* when he goes to the camp, and lay it under his pillow, and meditate on it in the morning after his exertions. The entertaining of noble thoughts will lead to noble actions; and the poor, debauched, and insolvent officer, beset with bailiffs and surgeons, will become, in the course of discipline, a sensible and prudent man, who perhaps deserve the appellation of a true hero; a title which can never be bestowed on a man whose courage wants conduct, and whose honour wants honesty.

He should recollect, that he has a soul like men who do not wear a red coat; and should think of that immortality which the wisest of mankind have expected. Let him not be ashamed of reading the Scriptures, and those excellent comments upon them, the sermons of our great English divines. It is false valour which sets God and eternity at defiance; and it is real cowardice to be afraid of the ridicule which the performance of religious, or any other duty, may incur. He is often heard to say, in the language of his profession, that it is upon duty, and it is to be wished he considered the meaning of the word in its full extent.

What is said to military men, must be extended to mariners. They have often sunk far beneath the level of humanity. The leisure and confinement of a ship ought certainly to lead them to seek improvement in letters. But yet a medium is to be observed. Their retirement must not be excessive, lest the fastidiousness of extreme delicacy should destroy the manly bravery and hardiness of the English sailor.

In attending to these admonitions, it will be found, that, while the happiness of many unfortunate individuals is increased, the glory and welfare of the community will be better secured. We shall certainly have less to fear from our enemies and also less from a standing army; for an enlightened understanding, which considers the nature of society, will see the propriety of subjecting, on all domestic emergencies, the military to the civil power.

I cannot close this subject without applauding those generous and liberal men, who, when their country was threatened with invasion, forsook all the comforts of their homes, and, without previous habits to endure them, submitted with alacrity to the inconveniencies of a camp, and the unsettled life of a soldier. Their judicious and patriotic ardour evinces that they wear a sword for their country's good, and are ready to draw it, at a moment's warning, on every foreign or domestic enemy.

NO. XX. ON THE AMUSEMENTS OF SUNDAY.

THE institution of a day devoted to rest and reflection, after six days spent in labour and dissipation, is not only wise in a political and religious view, but highly agreeable to the nature of man. The human mind is so constituted by nature, as to make greater advances by short flights frequently repeated, than by uninterrupted progression. After the cessation of a whole day, the operations of the week are begun with fresh ardour, and acquire a degree of novelty; a quality

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quality which possesses a most powerful effect in stimulating to application. In truth, no time is lost to the public by the observation of a Sabbath; for the loss of a few hours is amply compensated by the additional vigour and spirit which are given to human activity by the agreeable vicissitude. A thousand reasons might be assigned for the observation of it, supposing it wanted any, superadded to the sanction of divine authority. Among others, the long duration of this establishment is, in my opinion, an argument greatly in its favour; for human affairs, in a long course of years, settle, for the most part, like water, in their proper level and situation.

It may, then, be numbered among the follies of modern innovators, and pretenders to superior enlargement of mind and freedom from prejudice, that they have endeavoured to destroy the sanctity, and, in course, the essential purposes of this sacred institution. They have laboured to render it a day of public and pleasurable diversion; and, if they had succeeded, they would have made Sunday in no respect different from the other days of the week; for if one man were allowed to pursue pleasure at the usual public places, another, who felt the influence of avarice more than of the love of pleasure, would justly have claimed a right to pursue his lucrative labour. And, indeed, it must be owned, that there would be far less evil in prosecuting the duties of honest industry, than in relaxing the nerves of the mind by a dissolute pursuit of nominal pleasures; of such pleasures as usually terminate in pain, disease, and ruin. The national spirit and strength must be impaired by national corruption. Feebleness of mind is the unavoidable effect of excessive dissipation; but how shall the political machine perform its movements with efficacy, when the minds of the people, the springs of the whole, have lost their elasticity? If you were to prohibit honest labour, and allow public pleasures, Sunday would become a day of uncontrouled debauchery and drunkenness. It would infallibly sink the lower classes to that degenerate state in which they appear in some neighbouring countries, and would consequently facilitate the annihilation of civil liberty.

The decent observation of Sunday is indeed to be urged by arguments of a nature greatly superior to political reasons: but political Reasons are offered; because, with the opposers of the observation of the Sabbath, political arguments are more likely to have weight than religious. They who hold the Bible so cheap as to have confuted, in their own minds, every thing it contains, without ever having looked into it, are often the professed idolaters of *Magna Charta*. And though it might be in vain to urge, that Sunday should be decently kept for the sake of promoting the interests of the gospel, it would probably be an inducement to pay it all due attention, if we could convince certain persons, that a decent regard to it promotes such sentiments and principles among the people as have a tendency to support the Bill of Rights, and secure the Protestant succession. But every thing which promotes virtue is salutary to the mind, considered only as a medicine; as a bracer, if I may so express it, or a corroborative remedy. Now strength and vigour of mind are absolutely necessary, if we would constantly entertain an adequate idea of the blessings of liberty, and take effectual methods to defend it when it is infringed.

But, setting aside both religious and political arguments, or allowing them all their force, still it will be urged by great numbers, and those too in the higher spheres of life, that all business being prohibited on Sundays, they are really at a loss how to spend their time. "Let us," say they, "since we are forbidden to work, let us play. Let us have public diversions. There can be no harm in a polite promenade. Indeed" (they insist) "if it were not for the prejudices of the *canaille*, it would be right to permit more places of public diversion on Sundays than on other days; obviously because we have nothing else to do but to attend to them. But English prejudices are too deeply rooted to be eradicated. On the continent, the return of Sunday is delightful; but in our gloomy island it is a blank in existence, and ought to be blotted out of the calendar."

Such arguments are indeed attended with their own refutation; but it is certainly true, that some orders among us are distressed for methods of employing their time on a Sunday. I will therefore beg leave, from motives of compassion, to suggest some hints, which may contribute to relieve them from the very painful situation of not knowing how to pass away the lagging hours. Sunday is selected by the fashionable for travelling to their country seats or to the watering-places; and it is observed by the country people, that on no day do so many coaches with coronets pass through their towns and villages, as on the Lord's Day. But to Christians there are other employments peculiar to the day, which will leave no part of it disengaged. If any are not Christians, their contempt of the sabbath is one of the least of their errors, and, before it can be removed, a belief must be produced; to attempt which does not immediately fall within the limits or design of this paper.

But supposing them Christians, let us endeavour to provide amusement for them during the twelve hours in every seven days, in which the business of the world is precluded. If lords and dukes would condescend to go to their parish-churches, they might find themselves well employed from ten o'clock till twelve. To the prayers they can have no reasonable objection; and, with respect to the sermon, though its diction or its sentiments may not be excellent, yet, in the present times, the want of merit is usually compensated by brevity. And the great man may comfort himself during its continuance with reflecting, that, though he is neither pleased nor instructed by it, yet he himself is preaching in effect a most persuasive sermon by giving his attendance. His example will attract many auditors, and bad indeed must be the discourse from which the vulgar hearer cannot derive much advantage. If any charitable purpose is to be accomplished, and there never passes a Sunday, but in the metropolis many such purposes are to be accomplished, the bare presence of a man in high life will contribute greatly to augment the pecuniary collection. And, if a peer of the realm were as willing to give his presence at a charity-sermon

sermon as at a horse-race, to contribute to the support of orphans and widows, as to keep a stud and a pack of hounds, perhaps he would find himself no loser even in the grand object of his life, the enjoyment of pleasure.

The interval between the morning and evening service may surely be spent in reading, or in improving conversation. The rest of the day, even to eight o'clock, may be spent in the metropolis at church, if any one chuses it; for evening lectures abound. And, though there is no obligation to attend at more than the established times, yet no man can say there are no public places of resort, when he can scarcely turn a corner without seeing a church-door open, and hearing a bell importunately inviting him to enter.

The little time which remains after the usual religious duties of the day, may certainly be spent in such a manner as to cause no tedium, even though Carlisle-house is shut, and the rigid laws forbid us to enter Vauxhall, Ranelagh, and the theatres. A cheerful walk amidst rural scenes is capable of affording, in fine weather, a very delightful pleasure. In all seasons, at all hours, and in all weathers, conversation may furnish an exquisite delight; and such books may be procured as are able to improve, exalt, refine, and captivate. He who calls in question the truth of this, must allow his hearers to call in question his claim to rationality.

The subordinate classes, for I have hitherto been speaking of the higher, seldom complain that they know not what to do on a Sunday. To them it is a joyful festival. They, for the most part, are constant attendants at church; and the decency of their habits and appearance, the cleanliness which they display, the opportunity they enjoy of meeting their neighbours in the same regular and decent situation with themselves, renders Sunday highly advantageous to them, exclusively of its religious advantages. They usually fill up the intervals of divine service with a rural walk, and their little indulgences at the tea-houses are highly proper and allowable. They are confined to sedentary and laborious work during the week, and a walk in

the fresh air is most conducive to their health, while it affords them a very lively pleasure, such a pleasure indeed as we have all felt in Milton's famous description of it. The common people are sufficiently delighted with such enjoyments, and would really be displeased with those public diversions which our travelled reformers have desired to introduce.

Neither are they in want of disputing societies to fill up their time. There are parish-churches in abundance. After they have attended at them, it is far better that they should walk in the fields, than be pent up in a close room and putrifying air, where their health must suffer more than even in the exercise of their handicraft trade. But the injury of their health is indeed one of the least of the evils which they must endure, were they allowed to attend at every turbulent assembly, which either the avaricious or the discontented may convene. Weak understandings are easily led astray by weak arguments. Their own morals and happiness, and the welfare of the church and state, are greatly interested in the suppression of those houses, which were lately opened under the arrogant name of theological schools. The act which suppressed them reflects honour on the British senate. Such acts as this (which evidently displays an attention to the happiness of the most numerous class of the community) would excite the zeal of the good and religious on the side of the legislature, and would rouse, among those whose actions must carry weight with them because their characters are respected, such a spirit and unanimity, as would enable the executive part of government to support itself with honour and tranquillity at home, and act abroad with irresistible vigour.

Why should the present race, whether high or low, stand more in need of public diversions on a Sunday than our forefathers in the last and in the beginning of the present century? No good reason can be given. It may not indeed be improbable, that the true origin of this new-created want is, that the greater part of the present race, from the defect of a religious education, or from subsequent dissipation, which is found to obliterate all serious ideas, have no relish for the pro-

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per and natural methods of spending our time on a Sunday, the performance of religious duties, and the exertions of beneficence on principles of Christian charity.

No. XXI. ON THE COMPLAINTS OF MEN
OF LEARNING.

AN impartial observer will be obliged to confess, that if the real evils of men of genius and learning be not greater than those of others, yet the sense of them is commonly more acute. The same delicacy of feeling, which renders them particularly susceptible of intellectual beauty, makes them feel more sensibly the common distresses of human life.

Men of genius and learning are, for the most part, in a state of intense thought: while they, who are engaged in less refined pursuits, are frequently involved in mental insensibility; and since happiness is only in the mind, every little accident must disturb his repose who is always in meditation. The string which is constantly kept in a state of tension will vibrate on the slightest impulse.

The pleasures of men of literature, are those which arise from the contemplation of greatness, novelty, and beauty; pleasures of the purest and most exalted nature. Perhaps, no state is more truly happy than that of a man of genius, at the time he is closely engaged in surveying either of these three sources of imaginative enjoyment; but the very purity and excellence of these pleasures are ultimately the occasion of some degree of pain to their votaries. Our present condition will not permit merely mental gratifications to engross our whole care and attention; and when the mind reverts from its ideal bliss to the occupations which its union with a body of necessity enjoins, the transition from supreme delight to insipidity and vexation, becomes the occasion of peculiar misery.

Perfection is ever the object of genius; but perfection is not to be found in human affairs. Genius is, therefore, disgusted with the impossibility of obtaining that which is constantly in its view. This it suffers in the recesses of study: but upon entrance into the transactions and employments of busy life, the perfection to which it aspires is much more rarely visible. Objects, which to the common mind are pleasing or indifferent, appear to the mind of genius deformed and disgusting; because they fall short of that image of perfection, formed in the fancy, to which, as a standard, every thing is usually referred. Thus acuteness of discernment serves to discover concealed blemishes, as the microscope sees a spot where the naked eye beheld nothing but beauty.

The man of genius and application is generally engaged in serious employments. He lives (*σπουδαίως*, as the Greeks call it) constantly attentive to some end. The rest of the world devote the greatest share of their time to ease, merriment, and diversion. The man of severe study is sometimes drawn from his closet, in compliance with custom, or solicited by importunity, to partake of the ordinary amusements of common life. He goes with reluctance and timidity; for perhaps he cannot shine in company, and he looks upon every avocation as an obstacle to the accomplishment of his chief end and wishes. He returns with chagrin, because, in the hour of convivial gaiety or of festal levity, he has found his merits pass unnoticed, and his authority treated with neglect.

The several causes which have been thus far assigned for the querulous disposition of literary men, cannot reflect on them any disgrace: but there are others equally probable, and more dishonourable.

They who are constantly endeavouring to add to their attainments, mean at the same time to increase their value, and acquire reputation. Every step of progressive advancement fills the breast of the proficient with a higher opinion of his own merit, and confirms his consciousness of self-dignity. But the world is not privy to every new acquisition which the student makes in his closet. He therefore increases his exactions of re-

spect, before his companions are sensible of an increase of merit. From disappointed pride, therefore, the cultivator of knowledge derives no inconsiderable part of his uneasiness.

Every end that is worth pursuit, has a great number of pursuers. Competitors naturally look upon each other as enemies, mutually opposing their several wishes. This jealousy is no where to be found more frequent, or more violent, than among the pursuers of literary honours. The student is therefore often envious, and, than Envy, as the satirist remarks, no Sicilian tyrant ever invented a greater torture.

After all, perhaps, that lowness of spirits which a sedentary life, and an unremitted attention produce, may give rise to complaints founded only in an hypochondriac imagination.

Whether or not these are the true causes of the complaints and wretchedness of the learned, it is not very material to determine. Certain it is, that they who are furnished with the means of the greatest happiness, are frequently the most miserable. By attending to great things, they neglect those which appear little, but on which our happiness is found by experience greatly to depend.

NO. XXII. ON THE SUPERFICIAL NATURE AND PERNICIOUS TENDENCY OF MODERN ETHICS.

THE neglect of the classics, and of the ancient moral philosophers, in modern education, tends no less to injure virtue, and every valuable and lovely disposition of the heart, than to corrupt taste, and degrade dignity.

It is true indeed, that the present times, compared with the ancient, are properly the old age of the world. And if we reason from analogy, we must conclude, that they surpass, in the knowledge of external nature, the ages which have preceded. Accordingly we find in all those things, a skill in which necessarily depends

on long experience and extensive observation, that the moderns possess an indisputable superiority. In useful science, and in natural philosophy, the ancients fall so short, as not to bear the comparison. Aristotle and Pliny committed their dreams to writing, instead of an authentic natural history, and a rational system of physics. No one can justly question their ingenuity, but they wanted authentic matter for its exertion. They were contented with reports, not only concerning subjects which they had no opportunity of examining, but concerning those which fell under their notice. They induced general remarks from too small a number of particulars. Pliny indeed seems to have written a physical romance, with an intention to entertain, rather than to discover and communicate severe truths. The more marvellous his representation, the better it answered his purpose, and it was not very likely to be strictly canvassed in an age when the true spirit of philosophical enquiry was totally unknown.

The ancients had not those instruments of science, the air-pump, the telescope, and the microscope. And among their principal obstructions, is to be numbered, the want of knowing the futility of hypothesis, when unsupported by experiment. While fancy was allowed to amuse herself in framing systems of her own, reason sunk in repose, and declined the laborious task of close examination. The sincerest admirer of the ancients will therefore resign their pretensions to scientific excellence; and though he will recommend the study of Pliny as a classic who writes agreeably, yet will he advise the votary of science to substitute, in the place of him and of all the ancient naturalists, the works of Boyle, of Newton, of Buffon, and of the numerous writers in the Philosophical Transactions.

But for their defects in natural, the ancients compensate by their excellence in moral, philosophy. Mechanical instruments were not wanted to make observations on human nature. Natural sagacity, improved by generous education, and exercised in a civilized community, was enabled to make just conclusions concerning the powers, the passions, the duties, the vices of man as an individual, and as connected with others in

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his domestic, social, and civil relations. But the knowledge of nature and of her operations, compared with the knowledge of ourselves and of our duty, is of small consequence.

It is justly remarked, that our English divines are the best moralists with respect to matter, whom the world ever produced. And for this it is easy to account. They established their precepts on the firm basis of revealed religion, and not on the sandy foundation of human systems. But the misfortune is, that they are little attended to by those who stand most in need of reformation. The libertine, the man of the world, the polite modern philosopher, has been taught to associate the idea of dulness with a sermon, and would fear the imputation of prejudice, if he were to profess a belief of the received religion, and conform his actions to its precepts. His creed is formed from the opinions of Voltaire, Rousseau, Helvetius, Hume, and many others, who have perverted taste, genius, and learning, to the purpose of supporting unlimited libertinism.

It is not likely, that he who is taught to look upon himself only as an animal, furnished indeed with a superior degree of sagacity, but, like his fellow-brutes, doomed to perish for ever at death, should possess that elevation of sentiment which Christianity inspires, and which is necessary to constitute the great man in the private as well as in the public scenes of life. His principles necessarily lead him to assimilate with those animals, among whom he is ambitious of being numbered. The enjoyments of sense will be, in his idea, the chief good; and that severe virtue, which can alone render him serviceable to the great community of mankind, or distinguish him honourably in the society of which he is a member, he will esteem the characteristic of visionary enthusiasts, who know not the nature of man and the end of his existence.

But ancient philosophy teaches a respect for human nature. To have that reverence for one's self, which arises from a just sense of the superior endowments of a human creature, was a precept of the earliest philosophers, and was thought to be the best security for a generous and virtuous conduct. It is not pride; for

pride consists in arrogating merits to which it has no claim: but it is an adequate idea of our own dignity in the scale of being, when compared with the brutes, and a resolution to support it. Yet how should he think or act like the lord of the Creation, who is taught by the insinuations of modern philosopher, that man is to be classed in the same species with the ape and the monkey?

Among the profligate, indeed, and the uninstructed, we see humanity sadly depraved. Attentive only to the solicitations of the senses, and obedient to every passion, the vulgar, both of the higher and the lower ranks, lead a life truly and merely animal. If, however, it be wisdom to live according to nature, and the newly-divulged opinion, that man is no more by nature than a sagacious brute, be true, then are those whom we call the basest and most worthless of mankind the patterns of imitation, and the only true philosophers. Education, on these principles, is no longer necessary. The passions are competent guides, and the more violent they are, the more unambiguous their directions. Let our schools be shut up, for why should we be at the pains to study, while true wisdom and virtue are to be learned at an easy rate, of our brother-beasts in the stable and the dog-kennel?

It has been the aim of the earlier Poets, Legislators, Sages, and Reformers, to advance human nature from its primeval rudeness, to all the perfection of which it is capable in a state of civilization. Men in general have willingly followed their dictates, and have found progressive happiness in progressive improvement. It was reserved for the present age of paradox, to reconcile the idea of advancement with retrograde motion, of improving human life, by restoring habits, principles, and weaknesses, long exploded and overcome. It is well-known, that several celebrated writers have inferred the absurdity of many, not only innocent, but laudable and beneficial notions and practices, from their being unknown, or different from those established in savage nations in the state of nature. In order to im-
bibe ideas of decency and moral fitness, they have ob-
liquely referred us to the groves of Otaheite. That

such

such writers should have appeared is wonderful ; but it is still more so, that they should have found numerous readers and admirers. And it is a striking event in the history of mankind, that, after the efforts of several thousand years in promoting civilization, many were found desirous of returning to the wretched practices of savage life.

But even he who is taught to revere the wisdom of the naked Indian, and to despise the improvement of his own times and nation, is more likely to think and act with dignity, than the man who believes himself a machine. Such an one, to be consistent, must renounce the idea of the soul's supremacy over the actions of the body, and must resign himself to the impulse of that blood, of which alone he believes himself to consist. As an engine he will yield to every motion without resistance ; for the perfection of the machine depends on its moving with the least possible friction or impediment. The mistake of him who looks on himself in this light, is almost as absurd as that of the hypochondriac visionary, who, in the temporary madness of his reverie, imagines himself transformed into an inanimate substance.

The dark and disputatious style and manner in which the modern philosopher vents his sceptical ideas, though it may give his disciples a turn for metaphysics, and teach them to involve a dispute in perplexity, has very little tendency to improve the understanding, or to promote a frankness and honesty of disposition.

It is indeed with a pleasure equal to that of turning from a putrifying carcase, to behold the living body in a state of youth and beauty, that one leaves the poor inventions of the vain sceptic, and the gloomy metaphysician, to recollect the names and opinions of Socrates, Plato, Xenophon, and Cicero. From these I learn, what is confirmed by Christianity, that I have a soul within me, which shall survive its perishable habitation. These inform me, that human nature approaches to the divine ; that virtue will make me happy in myself, and recommend me to the favour of that Being who constantly superintends the world which he has created.

The philosophy of many among the moderns excludes religion. Infidelity is its basis. But can there be a truly great man without religion? There may be a cunning, a witty, an audacious man; but there cannot be a great man without religion. Nor will he become a good senator, a good judge, a good commander, or fill the lower departments of civil and social life with integrity and honour, who disregards an oath, and from principle seeks only self-interest and private gratification.

The man of the world, it is true, will often discharge the duties of his station with regular propriety. A regard for fame, a desire to enlarge and to preserve connections, will keep him within the bounds of apparent rectitude. But, where deviation can be concealed, where compliance with temptation is compatible with safety, what shall restrain him? Nothing in the moral system of a philosophical unbeliever.

NO. XXIII. ON THE STYLE OF HISTORY.

THE end of oratory is to persuade, of poetry to please, and of history to instruct by the recital of true events. The style of each must be adapted to produce the intended purpose, not only of the writer of any particular oration, poem, or history, but of oratory, poetry, and history in general. Any composition, arrogating either of these names, but assuming ornaments foreign to its nature, is faulty. It may be popular from fashion, personal influence, and caprice, but it will not descend to posterity; because it is inconsistent with those rules, which have been long and universally established, and which have been thus established, for no other reason but because they were found agreeable to the constitution of the human mind, and best fitted to produce on it a powerful effect.

The diction of oratory should be nervous, pointed, impetuous, and adorned with every embellishment which rhetoric has invented. Poetry admits a style

made up of graces. Every ornament, natural and artificial, may find a place in it. But it is not so with history: for the purpose of history is truth, and truth requires no more than to be fairly, openly, and unaffectedly exhibited. If then the embellishments appropriated to poetry and eloquence are borrowed by the historian, though his work may delight a vitiated taste, he must not be recommended as a model. History should indeed possess a dignity; but it should arise, like the majesty of Grecian architecture, from the simplicity of its ornaments.

No good rule is unsupported by a reason. And the reason why history admits not a profusion of embellishment is, that such embellishment cannot be applied without an obvious appearance of art; but the appearance of art tends to call in question the historian's veracity, his primary and indispensable excellence. The mind is naturally suspicious, and, where it finds art in one instance, it will expect that it exists in another, and is not seen, only because it is concealed with more subtilty.

Livy and Tacitus, excellent as they are in general, have been convicted of deviating into poetry. There are many passages in both of them, which, if you attend to the accentual and not to the syllabic quantity, may be scanned like hexameter verses. The language and thoughts in Livy's descriptions are often highly poetical; as, to mention, for instance, one particular passage, is the celebrated account of the combats of the Horatii and Curiatii. But this must be said in the defence of both, that they are transported by the warmth of their minds, when they are describing a very interesting transaction, and that, for the most part, their narrative proceeds with all the dignity and simplicity of a correct taste. Their deviations into poetry, though not strictly defensible, yet, as they appear to be the genuine effects of their feelings excited by extraordinary occasions, are really not displeasing. We can bear a few occasional flashes; but our eyes would turn away with pain from a long and continued glare. Yet names must not overpower the authority of reason and
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just criticism; and, if Herodotus, or Livy, or Tacitus, have admitted ornaments inconsistent either in their nature and number with an unaffected simplicity, they are so far faulty.

The assertion, that unaffected simplicity is the most beautiful grace of the historical style, and that the diction should not be such, either in the construction or selection of words, as to allure the attention of the reader from the facts to the words, from the hero to the writer, though it is perfectly consistent with my own opinion, does not rely for support on my judgment alone, but is fully confirmed by the best judges of antiquity.

With these ideas then in our minds, we will take a view of history, as it appears at present in the hands of recent historians, who have boldly claimed and received the palm.

It is generally agreed among learned critics, that some of the most popular historians of France have violated the gravity and dignity of the historic page, by perpetual attempts to be witty. When the reader takes up the history of a celebrated age and a renowned king, his mind is in a tone to admit elevated ideas, and such as are consistent with so noble and majestic a subject. And, though his imagination may be a little diverted, his taste and judgment are offended at finding, in the place of manly reflections, every paragraph terminating with the pert witticism of an epigram. It is evident, that such works may afford pleasure, because many have been pleased with them; but it is equally certain, that the pleasure is not such as results from legitimate history. The writer evidently labours to display himself and his own ingenuity; but it is one great secret in the art of writing, that the writer should keep himself out of sight, and cause the ideas, which he means to convey, fully to engross the reader's attention. They cannot indeed otherwise produce their proper effect. If there are any readers, who choose to have the writer present to their view, rather than the matter which he writes, they may be said to resemble those spectators who go to the theatre rather

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to see and hear a favourite actor, than to attend to the persons of the drama. It is not Shakespeare's Hamlet or Lear whom they admire, but some name which stands in rubric characters on the walls and in the play-bills.

But let us confine our present remarks to the historical taste, which has of late prevailed in our own country. It is certainly better than the French taste; but, if we may judge by the reception of one or two works out of several, it is by no means perfect. The historian of Charles the Fifth possesses so many excellencies, that it is almost sacrilegious to detract from his merit. But no writer is perfect; and I doubt not, from the opinion I entertain of his taste and candour, that he will confess, when the ardour of composition is abated, that his style has deviated from the historical to the declamatory. He relates the councils as well as the wars of nations with all the vehemence of a Demosthenes, and the rapid eloquence of a Ciceronian Philippic. The style is glowing and animated in a high degree; but does nature dictate, that a long and diffuse dissertation on such subjects as the feudal state, or on others equally dispassionate in themselves, should be treated in a style which would become an orator in the act of rousing his sluggish countrymen to repel an invader? I will not enter into an inquiry, whether such long dissertations legitimately belong to history or to another species of composition. I believe they might more properly be classed under the name of Political Dissertations. They find no place in the purer models of antiquity; and the reader has certainly a right to complain, when they occupy a disproportionate part of a work, and appear in the place of facts, on which he might make his own reflections. But the fire and *vivacità*, or the life and the spirit which is diffused over this respectable writer's page, induces us to forget a while the rules prescribed by the frigidity of criticism. What though he seems to have made Demosthenes his model, instead of Livy or Herodotus, yet surely, what bears any resemblance to the spirit of that noble Athenian, cannot fail to delight and improve. And it
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ought to be remembered, to the honour of this writer, that he has not made his history the vehicle of any opinions destructive of the civil or religious systems of his country.

It would be happy, if this praise could be extended to all our historians; but there has appeared a history, the faults of whose style should have passed unnoticed, if the matter had been less reprehensible. The style displays not the honest warmth of a Robertson, but appears with an air of soft and subtle insinuation, better adapted to introduce a lurking poison. The words are well chosen; but the collocation of them is feeble and effeminate, though painfully elaborate and affected. Idle epithets abound, which, while they load and weary the ear, add little to the meaning, and less to the force of the period, which they were intended to adorn. There is a disgusting affectation of fastidious delicacy. There is also a tedious sameness in the style, which renders the reading a toil, and which will gradually consign the work to its peaceful shelf, as soon as the fashionable world shall have found another idol; which, indeed, cannot be a distant event, since variety is essential to its enjoyments; and great books, though written by a man of fashion, and an infidel, are still great evils.

The very weak, insolent, and passionate manner, in which this writer answered one of his opponents, leaves his readers to conclude, that his philosophy has more in it of ostentation than reality. The whole work, indeed, exhibits marks of excessive vanity and conceit. But, such as it is, the learning and the labour displayed in it should have secured my respect, had it not insolently and wickedly laboured to exterminate the last remains of morality and religion from this country. It furnishes arguments for the ignorant and vicious in their disputing assemblies, and thus indirectly tends to sap the foundation of human happiness and of civil government. For, though the more learned and the better part of the community despise the weak and vain and wicked attempt, yet it must be remembered, that the majority consists of the foolish and the profligate.

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It was a mean subterfuge to make history the oblique channel of theological infidelity. An ingenuous young man takes up the book, from the laudable motive of improving his mind with historical knowledge. But, as he reads, he finds himself corrupted, and is cheated into irreligion and libertinism. The author, like others of his class, meant little more than to acquire distinction by alarming mankind with an attack of what they have been taught to hold dear and sacred. But though vanity is indisputably the motive, the consequences are no less malignant than if the work had originated in malice.

How much better would writers consult their own comfort in the evil day, on the bed of sickness, and at the hour of death, if they would adopt the humility of the Christian, and aim at no other distinction than the esteem and applause of the worthy! But such is the vanity of man's heart, that he is willing to resign, for the sake of an imaginary life of fame, all those hopes of a real and happy immortality, which a belief in Christianity so comfortably teaches us to entertain.

No. XXIV. ON THE MANNER OF WRITING VOYAGES AND TRAVELS.

IT is observed by those decisive critics, the book-sellers, who judge of the merit of a book by the criterion of its sale, that few books have succeeded better of late than voyages and travels. As that which succeeds is productive of gain, every superficial dripling, who takes a trip, takes also notes as he goes along; and, when he returns, puts them into a bookseller's hands to be furbished up, and swelled to a marketable size; and then out skips a brace of volumes. This, it must be confessed, is an ingenious method of making a journey pay its own expences.

It is not uncommon for Criticism to employ herself in pointing out the end or purpose of any species of writings

writings or writers; as, for instance, the end of poetry, which is to please, and of history, which is to instruct. Now, without any great theoretical skill, and without perusing a page of Aristotle, it is very clear, that the end of the greater part of writings and writers is the copy-money. What will sell, is often the first object; not what is conformable to the eternal laws of truth and propriety, nor what will most essentially promote the interests of human nature.

To please, is certainly a very valuable end. He who pleases innocently has performed his task well; but here, it seems, lies the difficulty. In order to please the vulgar mind, it is found necessary, through the dearth of genius, to introduce licentious ideas, and to strike at some of the outworks of religion and morality.

The Voyages to the South Seas are, indeed, in their design, of a kind very superior to those which I mean to censure. They do honour to the reign in which they were undertaken. They exhibit human nature in new lights, and furnish abundant matter for philosophical reflection. They are to the curious mind of man most delightfully entertaining; but the first writer of them fell into a lamentable error. Instead of relating the events, and leaving the reader to comment on them, he not only makes the comments himself, but makes such comments as tend to invalidate some of the most comfortable articles in the creed of his countrymen. Every reader was astonished when he found a Hawkeſworth, who had supported virtue and religion with such peculiar energy of diction and of sentiment, *adventuring* at last to call in question a particular Providence. Every reader was also astonished at some loose descriptions. It is very certain, that we might have been informed of some remarkable features in the Otaheitean character, if the indelicate and corrupting representations had been totally omitted. But who can wonder at what was written, when a Sandwich was the patron?

But let us pass from Hawkeſworth to Sterne. Who has read the exquisite touches of nature and sensibility in Sterne's Sentimental Journey, without feeling his nerves vibrate with every tender emotion! Sterne has shown what important effects may be produced by a true sim-

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plicity of style, and a faithful adherence to nature. I wish it were possible to give him the praise of morality as well as of genius; but the poison he conveys is subtle, and the more dangerous as it is palatable. I believe no young mind ever perused his books without finding those passions roused and inflamed, which, after all that the novelist can advance in their favour, are the copious sources of all human misery. Many a connection, begun with the fine sentimentality which Sterne has recommended and encreased, has terminated in disease, infamy, want, madness, suicide, and a gibbet. Every writer, whatever may be the weakness and folly of his own life, should take the side of virtue in his public writings, and endeavour to restrain the irregularity of those affections, which, under every restraint, are still capable of producing more evil than any other cause throughout the whole system of human affairs. It is our reason which wants all the aids which art can bestow. Our passions, without the stimulus of licentious or indulgent principles, will have strength sufficient to produce as much, and more, than nature has intended.

Much of Sterne's *Journey* is certainly founded on fiction; but it has nevertheless afforded a model to some of those, who have pretended to relate nothing but the truth. His sentimental and excessive sensibility was found so engaging, that most of the subsequent authors of travels have been induced to interweave into the body of their work an amorous episode. We have been made acquainted with the *embonpoint* of a servant at an inn, or rather at a hedge alehouse, and the parting pangs of the smitten traveller and his Dulcinea del Tobosa, have been recorded in London for our edification. The authors might possibly have been involved in a low or criminal amour, or have paid attention to a Madame de Blot, or a Madame d'Urfay; but why inform their readers of their gallantry, unless they mean to attract attention by inflaming those combustible passions, which, in youthful hearts, catch fire, like tinder, at a spark? The book however will be pretty sure to sell, and therefore will be encouraged by the modern Mæcenates.

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Nothing is more easy than to display that kind of wit, which consists in obscenity and in blasphemy. He cannot fail to attract notice, who attacks opinions which are held sacred; and it was not difficult for him, who panted for distinction only, to obtain it by burning the temple of Diana.

A few arrows have therefore been obliquely thrown, by the travellers of late years, on the Christian religion. The masque is the ridicule of popery; but the masque is transparent. All religion is indirectly stigmatised as weak superstition. Scriptural phrases are used with wanton profaneness in some of our most popular travels, and those levities and vices gently palliated, which are forbidden by the sacred laws, and by the British laws, and which British virtue has not yet generally admitted.

I really cannot help thinking, that voyages and travels require fewer of these or of any arts to render them entertaining than any other writings. Every man of sense and observation must see, as he passes through a foreign country, in every town and village into which he enters, some characteristic and singular circumstances, which cannot fail to please in the recital. Truth only requires to be represented, in order to render the narrative alluring. If any thing occurs injurious to the morals or the political principles of one's own country, it ought to be either totally suppressed, or represented with concomitant censure. I have observed one favourite topic of the conversation as well as writing of many travellers: it is the charming licentiousness of a foreign sabbath. They represent their country as much in the dark in many particulars; but the prohibition of public diversions on a Sunday, they consider as painful endurance, as impolitic, and as a relique of British barbarism or puritanical austerity.

With respect to the contents of some books of travels, which have been well received, I cannot help thinking it a species of literary fraud, when their authors fill them with long historical accounts, which every man might have collected at his own fire-side, as well as at Venice or at Naples. And I own I was once greatly cheated in finding

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finding a very tedious treatise on the consumption in a book of travels, where the title-page led me to expect a large fund of information on subjects relative to the manners and customs of a foreign country.

Travellers have often been censured for enumerating what are called trifling occurrences. I think the censure is unjust. Trifling occurrences are often very amusing. If, indeed, they were only amusing, and took up the room of other valuable matter, the censure might be well founded: but they lead to very important speculations. They suggest hints; and hints, to a fertile mind, are more acceptable than formal discourses, because they lead the mind to exert its own activity. I own I am pleased when the traveller speaks in the first person, and conducts us from inn to inn, and town to town, with all the familiarity of an old acquaintance. Every thing which concerns him interests us. We feel as he did in all his inconveniencies and distresses, and derive, from the whole account of small particulars, as well as great, a very valuable share and species of experience.

The style of voyages and travels should be plain, simple, perspicuous, and unaffected. I think they seldom appear to great advantage, but when written in the words of the traveller or voyager, at the very time at which the circumstances which he relates occurred. They have then the native hue and complexion of truth, which seldom fails to attach the mind when clearly presented to its view. It was therefore a want of judgment and of justice, which caused the writing of Cook's Voyages to be given to Hawkesworth. Hawkesworth, it is reported, gained several thousand pounds by those materials, which poor Cook had gone round the world to collect, and to relate which, as it afterwards appeared, he was well able. The Public, it is well remembered, received Cook's narrative much more favourably than the impertinent philosophy of Hawkesworth. When the information is so new and curious, as to confine attention by the force of its own attractions, the mind must nauseate obtruded superfluity.

When voyages and travels are free from those faults which I have endeavoured to point out, they are capable
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of affording a very high and a very pure delight. I know of no books of amusement whatever so well adapted to young people. They satisfy that eager thirst after knowledge, which is found very strong at a boyish age, and they contain nothing which can corrupt their imaginations. They interest the mind as much as a novel; but, instead of rendering it effeminate and debauched, they make it usefully inquisitive, and furnish it with matter for reflection. Any book, which innocently delights the young mind, is, at the same time, much more improving than the best books written too profoundly or too seriously to be capable of attracting its attention. Anson's Voyage, for instance, will contribute more to call forth genius, and open the blossoms of the mind, than a dull didactic treatise of the most sagacious philosopher.

It is then an useful attempt to endeavour to clear a species of books, which are capable of doing much good, and affording much pleasure, from these evils, which a desire of popularity and of gain has often admitted into them. What is already published cannot indeed be recalled; but it may possibly be useful to suggest to succeeding writers in this department, that they will then only deserve the esteem and favour of their countrymen, when they import from foreign lands the improvements which they find in them, and not when they introduce additions to that folly, vice, and irreligion, which abound in all countries without importation.

NO. XXV. ON THE FOLLY OF BEING ANXIOUSLY CURIOUS TO ENQUIRE WHAT IS SAID OF US IN OUR ABSENCE.

THE best dispositions have usually the most sensibility. They have also that delicate regard for reputation which renders them sorely afflicted by the attacks of calumny. It is not an unreasonable and excessive self-love, but a regard to that, without which a feeling mind cannot

cannot be happy, which renders many of us attentive to every word which is whispered of us in our absence.

From whatever motive it arises, an anxious curiosity to know the reports concerning ourselves is an infallible cause of much uneasiness. No virtue, no prudence, no caution, no generosity, can preserve us from misrepresentation. Our conduct must be misunderstood by weak intellects, and by those who see only a part of it, and hastily form a judgment of the whole. Every man of eminence has those in his vicinity who hate, who envy, and who affect to despise him. These will see his actions with a jaundiced eye, and will represent them to others in the colours in which themselves behold them. Many from carelessness, wantonness, or from a desire to entertain their company, are inclined to sport with respectable characters, and love to display their ingenuity by the invention of a scandalous tale. Nothing renders a man more agreeable in many companies than his possessing a fund of delicious anecdotes. Calumny is a kind of salt which, more frequently than wit, seasons the feast of conversation.

It is certain then, that from weakness, wantonness, or malevolence, a man, whose merit renders him a topic of conversation, will be misrepresented. He, who solicitously enquires what is said of him, will certainly hear something which will render him uneasy. His uneasiness will be increased, when he finds the poisoned arrow is shot in the dark: so that no abilities can repel the blow, and no innocence shield him from the assailant. Open attacks can be openly opposed; but the obscure insinuation proceeds without the possibility of resistance, like the worm, which penetrates the ship that has withstood the cannon. It is better, therefore, not to be too anxious to discover attacks, which, when discovered, add to our torment, but cannot be successfully resisted.

Indeed, we are apt to feel upon these occasions more acutely than we ought. We are told by a menial servant, or some other of our spies, that a person, whom we esteemed our friend, has spoken slightly of us, made a joke upon us, or cast a severe reflection. Immediately on hearing the information, our blood boils within us. The indignity, we imagine, calls for our warmest

warmest resentment. Our friend is discarded, or suspected, as a treacherous wretch, unworthy of our love and confidence. This hasty ebullition of resentment is, I am ready to allow, very natural, and so are many other disorders of the passions. But, if we were to study the case, and acquire a right idea of the ways of men in society, we should find that in such instances our resentments may not only be too violent, but causeless; for we should recollect, that a man, without absolutely relinquishing his principles, is often inclined, from the incidental influence of temper, of levity, of frolic, of intemperance, of precipitation, to speak inconsistently with them, and in a manner which the general tenour of his conduct uniformly contradicts. We should also recollect, that, besides this temporary variableness of the mind, the tongue is unruly; and, when the spirits or the passions are high, utters almost spontaneously what the mind, which ought to hold the bridle, would, in more deliberate moments, willingly restrain. If we reflect upon these things, and upon what has fallen under our experience, we may perhaps discover, that even real and worthy friends may speak unkindly of us, without any design to hurt us, or to violate the bonds of friendship. It is the infirmity of human nature which causes unintentional lapses in the duties of friendship, as well as in all other duties. By too eagerly listening to the casual censure whispered in a careless manner, we encrease the evil, and cause a rupture where no offence was intended.

A man, who is constantly solicitous to hear the reports which are raised of him, of his family, and of his conduct, depends, in a great measure, for happiness, upon his servants; upon those, whose ideas are narrow, and whose hearts too often ungrateful; who overhear a part of a conversation, and supply the rest, when they repeat it, by invention; who love to entertain their visitors and acquaintance with the private affairs of the house in which they live, and who are apt to blacken the characters of their supporters and protectors, in revenge for a reprimand, or from the natural malignity of a bad heart. The tongue, said Juvenal, is the worst part of a bad servant. But the

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master of a family, who is always endeavouring to collect what is uttered by his humble friends, as servants have been called, will find himself subject to perpetual mortification. And it is a circumstance which renders his solicitude peculiarly unwise, that, after all the idle stories which their garrulity or resentment may lead them to propagate, they may be as good servants as any others he might engage in their room, or as human nature, in its uncultivated state, is found in general to afford. Their foolish words, once uttered, vanish into air; and they return to their duties, and probably will serve their masters as usefully and as faithfully as if nothing had been said in their angry or unthinking moments. So little meaning and weight are there in the words of the weak and the passionate, and so inconsistent is it with wisdom to listen to that tale, which, while it sinks into the mind of him who hears that he is the subject of it, passes over the minds of others, as the shadow over the earth. Supposing it however to be noticed, remembered, and even capable of doing him an injury, yet he can only make it more mischievous by paying attention to it, and by giving it an importance not its own.

It will conduce, in a peculiar manner, to the peace of all persons who superintend large families, or large numbers of assistants, or of subordinate classes; such as the governors of schools and colleges, the generals of armies, the employers of manufacturers, and many others in similar situations; if they can habituate themselves to disregard those calumnies, which will certainly be poured upon them, though they should be far from meriting the least degree of ill treatment. Their hearts will indeed be often wrung with grief, if they are sensible of every ill-natured whisper which makes it way, like the worm in the earth, and may at last corrode the worthiest bosom, if the breast-plate of reason is not previously applied. Whoever has many individuals under his direction, is exposed to the malice of them all; and, as dispositions and tempers are often diametrically opposite, he can scarcely fail to offend as many as he pleases: for the very conduct which pleases one party will give offence to the other. Friends, as well as ene-

mies, are liable to ill-humour and caprice; and every poisoned arrow is levelled at the superintendant, as at a conspicuous mark. A man, who has many persons under him, must not only not go in search of the darts which are thrown at him, but, even when he cannot avoid seeing them, must let them waste their force unregarded. If he adopts not this conduct, his life will be a perpetual torment, and may possibly terminate in that which is the frequent death of good men, a broken heart.

Perhaps we might be less inclined to enquire what is said of us in our absence, and less affected with it when discovered, if we considered how freely we ourselves are apt to speak even of those we love. We censure and we ridicule others, in the gaiety and thoughtlessness of conversation, and what we have said makes so little impression upon ourselves that we forget it; and, in the next hour, probably speak with honour of the same persons, and then, and on all occasions, would be ready to serve them. Beware of the man, says Horace, who backbites his friend, or who defends him not when attacked by others. But such is his nature, that, in a fit of levity, a man will speak of another, and hear him spoken of in such terms as, in his serious moments, he would deeply resent. Let any man ask himself, whether he has not often said such things of others, without meaning to injure them, or ever thinking seriously of what he was saying, as, if he were to hear that they were said of himself, in any manner whatever, he would warmly retaliate? Let him then, when he finds he has been carelessly censured, endeavour to see the case in the same light in which he saw it when he carelessly censured others. Indeed, it must be allowed, that a man of sensibility and honour cannot take too much pains to vindicate his character from any open and direct calumny; but the same spirit which leads him to that manly conduct, will induce him to leave the dirty dealers in scandal to themselves, and to the misery of their mean occupation.

Though a delicate regard for character is virtuous and rational, yet it is really true, that we commonly estimate our own value among others much higher than it is estimated

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estimated by them. What is said of us seldom sinks so deeply in their minds as, from a vain idea of our own importance, we are apt to imagine. We are occasionally talked of, it may be, in the course of common conversation, and serve for topics, together with the weather, the wind, and the news of the day; but he who thinks that he is the constant object of his neighbours accurate and close inspection, is ignorant of human nature. Man's chief object of attention is himself; and though, to fill an idle hour, he may talk of others, it is carelessly and indifferently; and, whether he speaks in praise or dispraise, he often means neither to serve nor to injure. From supposing ourselves of more consequence with others than we are, we suspect, that they are conversing about us when they really think not of us; and, when they are known by us to have spoken unkindly or contemptuously, we immediately consider them as declared enemies. Our suspicions are awakened when led to entertain bad opinions of mankind, and our good-humour is soured for ever. "But good-humour," says an elegant writer, "is the salt which gives a seasoning to the feast of life; and which, if it be wanting, renders the feast incomplete. Many causes contribute to impair this amiable quality; but nothing, perhaps, more than bad opinions of mankind." To avoid bad opinions of mankind, much of their ill deeds, and ill sayings must be attributed to thoughtlessness, and not to malignity alone; we must not always be on the watch to hear what is said against us in an unguarded hour; we must be humble, and consider, whether we do not treat others just as we complain of being treated by them, and, while we complain of mankind, whether ourselves, and the dispositions which we entertain, do not furnish some of the justest causes of the complaint. Upon the whole, let it be our first object to do our duty, and not to be very anxious about any censure but that of conscience.

Let the weak and the ill-natured enjoy the poor pleasure of whispering calumny and detraction, and let the man of sense and spirit display the wisdom and dignity of disregarding them. The dog bays the moon, but the moon still shines on in all its beautiful serenity

and lustre, and moves in its orbit with undisturbed regularity.

The scriptures, among all their other recommendations, abound with passages which finely portray the human heart. I will cite one passage, which is very apposite to the subject of this paper: "Take no heed to all words that are spoken, lest thou hear thy servant curse thee. For oftentimes also, thine own heart knoweth, that thou thyself likewise hast cursed others." Bishop Hurd has an excellent sermon on this text, the perusal of which suggested many of the foregoing observations.

No. XXVI. ON THE EFFICACY OF MORAL INSTRUCTION.

IT seems to be tacitly agreed among men of the world, that, though books of moral instruction may afford pleasure to the young, or to those who love books, as a connoisseur loves a picture, or a virtuoso his medals, yet they are really of little utility in the actual conduct of life. They assert, that a few practical and artful maxims, collected from an actual intercourse with the living world, will be more serviceable than all the wisdom of the moral philosopher.

It is very certain, that a knowledge of the world, as it is called, will teach such a kind of wisdom as will tend to advance interest, and procure connections; but still I must maintain, that in itself, and uncontrolled by moral principles, it is a despicable kind of wisdom; for it is always incompatible with the ingenuousness of a good mind. It inculcates a submission to many meanesses. It renders life a continued series of deceit; and, indeed so far from esteeming such wisdom superior to that which we learn in books, I cannot help thinking it a more refined, and consequently a more execrable species of knavery.

The morality of books is therefore necessary to give this subordinate wisdom, dignity, and value. It enlarges the views, and induces us not to esteem our interest

terest at a higher rate than our conscience and our independence. It enables us to join, to the alluring qualities of an insinuating address, the respectable ones of a manly spirit and unshaken integrity. He who sets out in life with a mind untinctured with the morality of books, though he may probably attain success, can neither deserve it, nor adorn it, nor enjoy it. He who sets out in life with moral principles deeply fixed in his heart, though a deceiving and deceived world should neglect him, will find in his heart a source of joy, which the world, with all its riches and honours, cannot bestow.

But there is another objection raised against the efficacy of the moral instruction of books. The moralist is accused of requiring too much, and of prescribing rules and suggesting ideas of excellence, at which human creatures can never arrive. With all his pretended knowledge of the heart of man, he is said really to be ignorant of it, and to derive all his conceptions concerning it from beings who have not yet fallen. To learn such wisdom as will be really useful, say they, we must shut those books where pictures are exhibited, whose originals are not to be found in this sublunary sphere. The church, the porch, the Lyceum, and the academy, furnish only imaginary notions. If you would attain realities, you are obliquely referred to the brothel, the gaming table, and to all the haunts of avarice, fraud, and vicious pleasure. These, they add, are the schools in which man is described as he really exists; and in these the knowing part of mankind seek and find that wisdom, which is vainly sought by fools in the church or in the library.

It is true, that books do indeed represent things better than they are; but it is as true, that, in doing so, they do what they ought. It is their praise, and not their shame. They endeavour to raise human nature, and they succeed in the attempt; for, however bad the world may be, the extremes of wickedness are to be found among those who do not read, not among those who have been educated in the doctrines contained in the moral philosophers; and whatever exalted excellence occurs in the world, is produced by

those, whose minds have been cultivated by moral instruction,

If things were to be described by the moralist merely as they are; if only such precepts were to be given by him, as tend to teach the young mind how to deceive, and to practise those vices which abound in the world, public degeneracy and corruption would certainly increase to a degree which can hardly be conceived. Wretched indeed is man without the assistance of a moral guide; and wretched, and even infernal would be the state of society, if books were not continually employed in checking our precipitate course to moral degeneracy. We can hardly imagine what an appearance society would assume, if books were precluded; because we can never experience any thing like it in these ages, when scarcely an individual arrives at maturity, without receiving some instruction, either oral or written, primarily derived from books.

I have myself heard it objected to the great Addison by men of the world, that they could not approve his writings, because, as they said, he labours to render man what he never can be. I will venture to assert, notwithstanding this charge, that more good has redounded to the English nation from the lucubrations of Addison, than from the active labours of any one individual, however high his station and powerful his influence. The Spectators are at this time every where read through the British empire, and much of the learning and good qualities, which have appeared among us since their publication, has been derived from them. No books are more popular, from the highest to the lowest orders; and that the British nation is not sunk to the level of its neighbours, is, in great measure, to be attributed to a book of moral instruction universally studied, in which things are represented better than they are, and the comparative dignity of human nature nobly vindicated.

It is from the erroneous idea, that very little advantage in the conduct of life is to be derived from books of moral instruction; that our English sermons, which abound in the best morality, enforced in the most powerful manner, are almost universally neglected.

ed. They are indeed bought by young divines for the use of the pulpit; but they are little read in the closet. An unconcerned spectator would be led to suspect, from such a circumstance, that most men were insincere, and that there subsisted a tacit agreement between them to deceive and be deceived. For many among them, who attend to and applaud a sermon as it is pronounced by the preacher from the pulpit, would blush to be found in their retirements with a volume of sermons in their hands. If they really believed the matter of sermons, it is of so very interesting a nature, that they must be tempted to read them with avidity; but the same unfortunate idea prevails, that though the moral discourse may serve in its proper place to amuse an audience, it is not sufficiently efficacious to be able to influence the conduct of life. It is considered as a matter of form, which very good sort of people may attend to from motives of decency, and then return to their former conduct unaltered and unimproved.

The end which I have chiefly in view, in submitting these remarks, is not only to recommend an attention to books and instructive discourses, but to produce, if possible, an alteration in the scope and object of that attention. I wish readers to take up a book with a desire to receive from it moral instruction, and not merely literary entertainment. Every one of us, whatever are our improvements, is liable to relax in his principles, unless they are frequently renewed and strengthened by admonition. Fortunately for us, books of morality abound; and places, where instruction is given in the most solemn manner, and under the most awful sanctions, are almost daily opened for our reception. But, alas! how few of us purchase and peruse a book with a sincere desire to be rendered better men; and how many attend to the preacher solely to gratify our curiosity, and derive amusement! Bad indeed must be the book and the sermon, from which any man may not, if he will, receive some hint, which, when seriously reflected on, would lead to improvement. But our want of humility, and our idea that subjects, which concern our worldly interest and pleasure, are the only subjects worthy the care of a

man of sense, render all which the wisest men have collected for our guidance utterly abortive.

What are the books which men in the exercise of power, and men of business, chiefly regard? Such as have a tendency to facilitate the mechanical parts of their several employments: poor and mean things, in comparison with the sublimity of objects moral and religious. Yet all others they are too apt to consider as trifling and nonsensical, serving indeed to fill up the time of those who have nothing else to do, but not worth the notice of the man of sense and of the world. From such modes of thinking originate narrowness, illiberality, and ignorance, the fruitful parents of every vice which can render their possessor miserable, and be injurious to society.

No. XXVII. ON MODERN CRITICISM.

I Cannot help thinking, that the effect which a literary work is found to produce, is the best criterion of its merit; and that sentiment or feeling, after all that has been urged by theoretical critics, is the ultimate and infallible touchstone to appreciate with precision the works of taste and genius. Theoretical criticism constitutes indeed a very ingenious species of writing; but before I can be really pleased with a poem or a piece of oratory, I must feel its excellence. I may be convinced of the merit of a work by a series of abstruse and metaphysical argumentation, and yet, on reading it, find myself greatly disappointed. There is indeed, in all works of true taste and genius, something of that elevated nature, which cannot be pointed out by verbal description, and which can only be perceived by the vibrations it produces on the nervous system.

The inference I mean to draw from this truth is, that they who have enjoyed the benefits of a good education, and improved their parts which were naturally good, may deserve the praise of good critics, when they

they pronounce on a work, that it is good or bad, or make any particular remarks on its beauties and deformities, according to their feelings, even though they should not be able or inclined to give such subtle and far-fetched reasons for their judgment as have lately appeared in some very ingenious writings of this age.

Those readers will not deem this subject unnecessary, who are informed, that even Mr. Addison has been refused, in the present age, the name and the praise of a critic. "It must not be dissembled," says, Dr. Hurd, "that criticism was, by no means, his talent. His taste was truly elegant; but he had neither that vigour of understanding, nor chastised philosophical spirit, which are so essential to this character. For what concerns his criticism on Milton in particular, and as to his own proper observations, they are for the most part, so general and indeterminate, as to afford but little instruction to the reader, and are not unfrequently altogether frivolous." But Addison is censured in good company, even with Bouhours and Longinus.

Some men are distinguished by a superior sensibility and a delicacy of taste, others for an acute and logical understanding; those are formed to excel in criticism, and these in philosophy. The provinces are separate; and it must be allowed, that philosophy has oftener invaded the province of criticism, than criticism of philosophy. Philosophy may indeed derive much and valuable matter from philology; but she will assimilate it to herself, and the whole will yet be philosophy. She must allow criticism to judge by a test the least fallible, when applied to works of imagination and sentiment, the genuine feelings of improved and cultivated nature. I would compare an abstruse philosopher, when he considers the works of genius, to an anatomist, who will not pronounce a human body perfect and beautiful till he has examined its internal conformation; while the man of taste may be said to resemble a sensible spectator, who at first sight, and without any laborious investigation, pronounces a figure graceful in its symmetry, shape, and colour.

What then, it will be asked, is criticism to be left for ever vague and indeterminate, and is there no standard of taste? I answer, That the feelings of the majority of men coinciding for a number of years in the same object, constitutes a standard sufficiently certain and uniform. Men are so like each other in the constituent principles of their minds, that the work which has pleased the greater part during a long time, will please the whole, if their minds are properly cultivated, and will please them for ever. And as to accidental differences in opinion, or deviations from this standard, they are only the characteristic irregularities, which attend every thing sublunary, and do not invalidate the justness of the general opinion. The persons who entertain them are pleased with the error of which they are unconscious; and, after all that has been said with an air of importance, errors in matters of taste are seldom injurious either to individuals or to society.

In truth, I think the philosophers arrogate too much, when they allow none but themselves to give sentence on the merit of a work of elegant literature. A polite and classical scholar, who has not immersed himself in the profundities of modern metaphysics, is, in my opinion, completely qualified for the office of a critic. If, after reading a book, he pronounces, from the general effect of it on his sentiments, that it is good or bad, solid or superficial, elegant or vulgar, sublime or low; and, if the sentence he pronounces is afterwards, or has already been confirmed by the public voice, that scholar is so far a critic. And, indeed, such criticism is far more valuable to the generality of readers, to serve and enlighten whom ought to be the scope of every writer, than speculative refinements.

At the same time, I would by no means disparage the admirable works of Aristotle. I have been delighted with the philosophical criticism of many writers of North Britain, and with the beautiful illustrations of ancient critics and philosophers, given to the world by a Hurd and a Harris. All I mean to contend for is, that writers of this order should not depart from their proper sphere, that of philosophy; and, from a
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kind of literary lust of dominion, extend their empire over that agreeable sort of criticism, which has delighted and improved so many readers, and which has appeared so charming in the works of Longinus, Bouhours, and Addison.

As a vindication of Addison, I will cite the words of his late penetrating biographer. "Before," says he, "the profound observers of the present race repose too securely on the consciousness of their superiority to Addison, let them consider his remarks on Ovid, in which may be found specimens of criticism sufficiently subtle and refined; let them peruse likewise his Essay on Wit, and on the pleasures of Imagination, in which he founds art on the base of nature, and draws the principle of invention from dispositions inherent in the mind of man, with skill and elegance, such as his contemners will not easily attain."

I have introduced these remarks with an intention to vindicate the liberty of readers and writers, who really might fear to give their opinions in general terms on the merit of a work, or a passage of it, while their remarks, unaccompanied with a formal and abstruse disquisition, might be in danger of receiving the contemptuous epithets of frivolous and superficial: epithets which writers ingenious indeed, but too much attached to metaphysical refinement, have ventured to bestow on that ornament of letters and of mankind, the chief writer in the Spectator: an author, whose criticisms will live and flourish, when the dry speculations which censure them shall fall to decay, and be as if they had never been.

And with respect to the value and utility of those very subtle disquisitions in criticism, which have distinguished the present age of literature, we may perhaps collect an idea of the degree in which we ought to estimate them, if we attend to the advice of a very judicious writer.

"I would advise," says a great philologist, "a beginner in this elegant pursuit, the study of criticism, to avoid subtle and far-fetched refinement,

“ which, as it is for the most part adverse to perspicuity and truth, may serve to make an able sophist, but never an able critic.”

NO. XXVIII. ON THE PERIODICAL ESSAYISTS.

I AM not in the number of those politicians, who estimate national good merely by extent of territory, richness of revenue, and commercial importance. I rather think that pure religion, good morals, fine taste, solid literature, and all those things, which, while they contribute to elevate human nature, contribute also to render private life dignified and comfortable, constitute that true national good, to which politics, war, and commerce, are but subordinate and instrumental. Indeed, one cannot always say so much in their praise; for, after all the noise which they make in the world, they are often injurious to every thing, for which society appears, in the eye of reason, to have been originally instituted.

Under this conviction, I cannot but conclude, that such writers as an Addison and a Steele have caused a greater degree of national good than a Marlborough and a Walpole. They have successfully recommended such qualities as adorn human nature, and such as tend also, in their direct consequences, to give grandeur and stability to empire. For, in truth, it is personal merit and private virtue, which can alone preserve a free country in a prosperous state, and indeed render its prosperity desirable. How are men really the better for national prosperity, when, as a nation grows rich, its morals are corrupted, mutual confidence lost, and debauchery and excess of all kinds pursued with such general and unceasing ardour, as seduces the mind to a state of abject slavery and impotence? If I am born in a country, where my mind and body are almost sure to be corrupted by the influence of universal example, and my soul deadened in all its nobler energies, what

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avails it, that the country extends its dominion beyond the Atlantic and the Ganges? It had been better for me that I had not been born, than born in such a country.

Moralists, therefore, who have the art to convey their instruction successfully, are the most valuable patriots, and the truest benefactors to their country. And among these I place in the highest rank, because of the more extensive diffusion of their labours, the successful writers of periodical lucubrations.

Among these, the *Tatler* is the first in the order of time, who will claim attention. For those which preceded were entirely political and controversial, and soon sunk into oblivion, when the violence of party which produced them had subsided. But the general purpose of the *Tatler*, as Steele himself declares, was to expose the false arts of life, to pull off the disguises of cunning, vanity, and ostentation, and to recommend a general simplicity in our dress, discourse, and behaviour. A book written with this purpose was sure to survive the transitory productions of polemic and political virulence.

Steele has mixed politics with morality; and, indeed, many of the first papers were of so heterogeneous a composition, that, while an attempt was made to please all tastes, there was scarcely matter sufficient in quantity of the same kind to satisfy any one. The introduction of news and political intelligence would be disapproved in this age; but, at that time, they served to allure common readers, who could scarcely, by any other means, have been enticed to give a tention to subjects of taste and morality.

The papers soon acquired new lustre by the co-operation of Addison. Addison eclipsed Steele; but yet I cannot sufficiently admire the generosity of Steele, and his freedom from jealousy and envy. He felt Addison's superiority; but it seems to have excited no other emotions than gratitude and admiration. "This good office he performed," says he, speaking of the assistance which Addison gave him, "with such force of genius, humour, wit, and learning, that I fared like a distressed prince who calls in a powerful neighbour

“ neighbour to his aid: I was undone by my auxiliary.” Addison, indeed, added gravity and dignity to the work, which has conferred on it a permanent value. The levity and the motley manner of Steele would not have entitled him to the attention of a succeeding age, though it might have pleased in his own day by its novelty.

The general state of conversation and of literary improvement among those who called themselves gentlemen, at the time in which the *Tatler* was written, was low and contemptible. The men, who from their rank, fortune, and appearance, claimed the title of gentlemen, affected a contempt for learning, and seemed to consider ignorance as a mark of gentility. The *Tatler* gradually opened their understandings, and furnished matter for improving conversation. It not only gave them information on the particular topics on which it treated, but also, by leading them to think on all that passed before them, in a similar manner, insensibly superinduced a habit of ingenious and philosophical reflection. There was no longer a necessity of invariably recurring to politics; a subject, which is in its nature contentious, and often tends to sour the milk of human kindness. Indeed, it is said, that to divert the attention of the nation from political subjects, was one principal motive for the publication of the *Tatler* and *Spectator*. Whatever was the motive, the result was highly beneficial to the nation at large, and is felt in its influence at this hour. Steele, though he was excelled by subsequent writers, certainly deserves that share of fame and gratitude which is due to the first projectors of every important institution.

Addison, who had appeared with peculiar lustre in the *Tatler*, was to shine again in the *Spectator* with still brighter and more permanent glory. The great charm of his diction, which has delighted readers of every class, appears to me to be a certain natural sweetness, ease, and delicacy, which no affectation can attain. Truths of all kinds, the sublime and the familiar, the serious and the comic, are taught in that peculiar style, which raises in the mind a placid and equable flow of emotions; that placidness and equability,

lity, which are in a particular manner adapted to give permanency to pleasurable sensation. A work, which warms our passions, and hurries us on with the rapid vehemence of its style, may be read once or twice with pleasure; but it is the more tranquil style which is most frequently in unison with our minds, and which, therefore, on the tenth repetition, as Horace says, will afford fresh pleasure. Addison rejected that levity and medley of matter, which often appeared disadvantageously in a single paper of the *Tatler*, and usually wrote regular treatises on the most important and most interesting subjects of taste and morality. Such subjects will never be antiquated; but the strictures on the dresses and diversions of the times, whatever merit they possessed, could not have rendered the work immortal. There are, indeed, many papers of very moderate merit; but it could not be otherwise, when the publication was daily, and the whole number considerably more than half a thousand. Neither Addison's other engagements, nor his abilities, great as they confessedly were, could have allowed him to compose every speculation.

The *Guardian* has very properly been called a Continuation of the *Spectator*. Its plan and its execution are in reality the same, though the editor, as Steele may be called, intended a little variety in the original institution. The instruction was intended to be conveyed in the character of a *Guardian* to the Lizard family; but the design was by no means consistently supported. "The character of the *Guardian*," says a sagacious writer, "was too narrow and too serious: it might properly enough admit both the duties and the deficiencies of life, but seemed not to include literary speculations, and was in some degree violated by merriment and burlesque. What had the *Guardian* of the Lizards to do with clubs of tall or of little men, with nests of ants, or Strada's proflusions?"

The *Tatler*, the *Spectator*, and the *Guardian* claim the first rank among the periodical writers, not only because they led the way, which however is a great merit, but because they possess superior excellence, and have rendered that excellence most diffusive in its effect, by a popular mode of displaying it. Their example, however,

ever, has excited several followers, who have obtained and deserved a very illustrious reputation.

With respect to the Rambler, if I have prejudices concerning it, they are all in its favour. I read it at a very early age with delight, and, I hope, with improvement. Every thing laudable and useful in the conduct of life is recommended in it, often in a new manner, and always with energy, and with a dignity which commands attention. When I consider it with a view to its effects on the generality of the people, on those who stand most in need of this mode of instruction, it appears greatly inferior to the easy and natural Spectator. Those elegant and expressive words derived from the Latin, which are called by common readers hard words, and which abound in the Rambler, will prevent the greater number from entering on the perusal. And, indeed, with all my prepossessions in favour of this writer, I cannot but agree with the opinion of the public, which has condemned in his style an affected appearance of pomposity. The constant recurrence of sentences in the form of what have been called triplets, is disgusting to all readers. But I will remind his censurers, that Cicero himself, in several of his works, fatigues the ear by a close of his periods almost uniformly similar. Not only the numbers, but the very words are frequently repeated in a few pages. I will also take the liberty to add in his defence, that the introduction of so many unusual and well-sounding words will gradually improve the English language, though it must necessarily circumscribe the writer's popularity. It seems, however, as if he himself recognized the fault of perpetual triplets in his style, since they are by no means frequent in his last productions.

The Adventurer is an imitation of the Rambler. It is written with remarkable spirit, and with the benevolent design of promoting all that is good and amiable. The stories make a very conspicuous figure in it, and tend to diffuse its influence among those readers, who might probably have been deterred from reading it, had it consisted only of didactic discourses, written in a style approaching to the lexicaphantic.

Triplets

Triplets were greatly in fashion when the *Adventurer* was published, and it is therefore no wonder that they abound in it. Great indeed are its merits in every view; but I cannot discover in the diction the sweetness and the delicacy of Addison.

The *World* is written in a style different from all the preceding. There is a certain gaiety and gentility diffused over it, which gives it a peculiar grace when considered only as a book of amusement. That it inculcates morality with any peculiar force, cannot be said. But it gives many valuable instructions, without assuming the solemn air of a severe moralist. The *World* appears to me, when compared with the *Rambler* and the *Adventurer*, like Horace when compared with Juvenal. The philosophy of the *World* is the philosophy of Aristippus.

The *Connoisseur* abounds in wit and a very pleasant species of humour. The book, however, is rather diverting than improving; yet, under the form of irony, many useful truths are conveyed with great success. There is no elevation of sentiment, and no sublime discourses on religion and morality; but there is a great deal of good sense expressed with good-humoured drollery. The authors were by nature possessed of wit, and had acquired a very considerable knowledge of the classics. The comic writers, such as Plautus and Terence, seem to have pleased them most, and they have rather undervalued the serious writers of morality. In one part of the twenty-seventh paper there is an oblique censure of the *Rambler*. "This new-fangled manner of delivering our sentiments," says the *Connoisseur*, "is called writing sound sense; and, if I find this mode seems likely to prevail, I shall certainly think it expedient to give into it, and very suddenly oblige the world with a *Connoisseur* so sensible that it will be impossible to understand it."

Every one of these works is calculated to promote good sense and virtue; and whatever may be the defects of each, the variety of their manners is well suited to the variety of dispositions and of tastes which occur in the mass of mankind. They have been found experimentally to improve life as well as conversation. And, with respect

respect to the improvement of conversation, "nothing is so proper for this purpose," says the solid Johnson, in his preface to Addison's Poems, "as the frequent publication of short papers, which we read not as study but amusement. If the subject be slight, the treatise likewise is short. The busy may find time, and the idle may find patience."

NO. XXIX. A CULTIVATED MIND IS NECESSARY TO RENDER RETIREMENT AGREEABLE.

FEW are able to bear solitude, and, though retirement is the ostensible object of the greater part, yet, when they are enabled by success to retire, they feel themselves unhappy. Peculiar powers and elegance of mind are necessary to enable us to draw all our resources from ourselves. In a remote and solitary village, the mind must be internally active in a great degree, or it will be miserable for want of employment. But in great and populous cities, even while it is passive, it will be constantly amused. It is impossible to walk the streets, without finding the attention powerfully solicited on every side. No exertion is necessary. Objects pour themselves into the senses, and it would be difficult to prevent their admittance. But, in retirement, there must be a spirit of philosophy and a store of learning, or else the fancied scenes of bliss will vanish like the colours of the rainbow.

Poor Cowley might be said to be melancholy mad. He languished for solitude, and wished to hide himself in the wilds of America. But, alas! he was not able to support the solitude of a country village within a few miles of the metropolis!

I lately paid a visit to a friend, who has withdrawn from the hurry of business to enjoy the sweets of a rural retirement in the south of Wales. His house is situated on an eminence, which commands an agreeable

able prospect. At the bottom of his garden, which is laid out in a taste peculiar to himself, yet entirely conformable to nature, runs a small river, remarkable for the smoothness of its surface and the clearness of its water; but, though the house is perfectly agreeable in situation some have thought that the freshness of the air, the beauty of the scenery, and the silence of retirement, can by no means compensate the want of a neighbourhood: for, to say the truth, there is not a single house to be seen within a mile of the little solitary villa, except one poor cottage inhabited by his gardener.

Though I was at first, like the rest, much disposed to disapprove the solitude of my friend's habitation; yet, when I had resided with him a little while, and had enjoyed the calm and rational pleasures of philosophic ease, I became enthusiastically fond of sequestered life. It must, indeed, be confessed, that Hilario possesses some peculiar qualities necessary to render solitude agreeable. He has a natural sweetness of temper, a refined taste for literature and music, and, at the same time, some relish for the common diversions of the country. But though he divides the greater part of his time in the alternate amusements of his books, his harpsichord, his dogs and his horses, yet is he never so happy as in the enjoyment of the conversation of a friend, whose manners and sentiments are congenial with his own.

It must not be forgotten, that he derives much of his pleasure from a knowledge of botany and natural philosophy, which he acquired in the former part of his life. His acquaintance with these sciences enables him to make great improvements in the cultivation of his garden, where almost every plant, which is curious, useful, or beautiful, is brought to its highest perfection.

It might perhaps be supposed from the seclusion of his life, that he is utterly unacquainted with the living world. He takes care, however, to inform himself of the topic of the day, by attending to periodical publications of repute and authenticity; and he is allowed to make most pertinent observations on the taste, manners,

ners, and politics of the present times. His remarks have always this peculiar excellence, derived, perhaps, from his distance from parties, that they favour of that liberal spirit, which marks the true gentleman and the citizen of the world.

The great evil of solitude is, that reason becomes weak for want of exercise, while the powers of imagination are invigorated by indulgence. The gloomy ideas of Popish superstition were derived from the cells of the monastery. Fanaticism and bigotry, melancholy and despair, have usually been produced in the cave and the convent. Happy in a mind furnished with ideas of every kind, Hilario is never at a loss for occasions to exert the powers of his reason; and can, at all times, divert his imagination from the horrors of the spleen, by the pleasing employments of literary pursuits.

The avocations of an active life shortened a visit which I would gladly have protracted. I return to the engagements of the world, supported by the soothing expectation, that a time will come, when I shall be able to spend the evening of life in a sweet retreat, like that of Hilario.

With a virtuous and cheerful family, with a few faithful and good-humoured friends, with a well-selected collection of elegant books, and with a competency, one may enjoy comforts even in the deserted village, which the city, with all its diversions, cannot supply.

No. XXX. ON AFFECTATION OF THE VICES AND FOLLIES OF MEN OF EMINENCE.

IT has frequently happened, that men, distinguished by their genius, have, from an unsettled habit of life, from an affectation of singularity, or from uncommon warmth of constitution, neglected the rules of prudence, and plunged themselves into the miseries of vice and dissipation. They who are but slightly acquainted with

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with the lives of our English writers, can recollect many instances of men of the brightest parts, whose lives, after an uninterrupted course of misery, have terminated under the pressure of want in the confinement of a gaol. They have been admired, and at the same time neglected; praised, and at the same time starved.

As the consequences of their imprudence are generally fatal, and generally known, a reasonable mind would scarcely believe, that any should be found ambitious of treading in their footsteps, when they err. Yet, such attraction has the brilliancy of literary reputation, that every witling, who pens a stanza, while he should be engrossing a deed, looking upon himself as a genius of uncommon magnitude, thinks it necessary, in order to complete his character, to plunge into the excesses of drunkenness and debauchery. When his follies have thrown him out of his profession, ruined his health, and shut him up in a prison, he consoles himself with reflecting, that he shares the same fate which the great wits, his predecessors, have suffered before him. He is happy even to be wretched with an Otway, a Dryden, or a Savage.

This unfortunate conduct is owing to a mistaken opinion, too generally adopted; that vice is the mark of laudable spirit, and that spirit is the characteristic of genius. Prudence, caution, common sense, are, in the idea of many, the concomitants of dulness. The phlegmatic disposition of a fool, say they, can guide him through life in the straight road of prudence; but the volatility of genius is continually tempted to turn out of the direct path to gather flowers on the sides, to view every pleasing prospect, and to discover new ways through unfrequented labyrinths.

But it may be a reasonable question, whether this propensity to deviation may not be a weakness, rather than a superior strength of mind; whether it is not sometimes the voluntary effect of pride and affectation; and whether it is not oftener caused by a restlessness of constitution, than by a more energetic activity, or an acuter perception. Sensibility of mind, and fineness of feelings, are always the attendants of true genius.

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These, which by themselves constitute a good heart, when joined to a good head, naturally give a greater tendency to virtue than to vice: for they are naturally charmed with beauty, and disgusted with every kind of deformity. Virtue, therefore, who is amiable in the eyes of her enemies, must have additional charms for those whose susceptibility of beauty is more delicate and refined; and vice, who is naturally loathsome, must appear uncommonly odious to those who are uncommonly shocked at real turpitude.

Nor are there wanting instances, that men of the most exalted genius can be men of the most unspotted virtue. Addison, the glory of our nation, was only equalled in his abilities by his piety, by the purity of his morals, the integrity of his heart, and the prudence of his conduct. Pope was a man of exemplary piety and goodness. Gay, though licentious in his writings, is said to have been uncontaminated by the vices of the world; and though instances are numerous on the other side, yet these few are sufficient for the refutation of that prevalent notion, that great genius is incompatible with steady prudence and consistent virtue.

The folly of those who are only pretenders to genius, and who affect vice as essential to the character they assume, is as pitiable as it is ridiculous. Their egregious vanity will probably render all addresses to them useless: but they may take it as an infallible prediction; that dear-bought experience will soon induce them to wish they had altered their conduct, when it shall be too late to enjoy the benefits of an early amendment.

The fatal error of supposing vice the characteristic of spirit, has led many a parent to undo the child whose happiness he most wished to promote. The man of parts and fashion sends indeed his boy to school; but cannot bear that he should apply to books with any remarkable diligence, lest he should be mistaken for a plodder; nor that he should be singularly tractable and modest, lest he should be thought deficient in spirit; but ventures to form sanguine hopes of his future eminence, if he is the ringleader of every riot, and is fortunate enough to gain at school the appellation of a Pickle.

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Great writers have indeed indirectly patronized the cause of scepticism and immorality ; but, if names are to have weight in this argument, to a Hume, a Rousseau, a Voltaire, we may confidently oppose, a Lowth, a Hurd, a Porteus, a Johnson, and many more in the retired walks of literary life, whom every Virtue, as well as every Muse, is proud to claim as her deserving votary.

No. XXXI. ON THE INEQUALITIES OF
GENIUS.

THE experience of every man, who has devoted himself to literature, will evince the truth of the remark, that there are times when the mind, however urged by necessity, is incapable of submitting to the confinement of application. The liveliest imaginations, and the strongest intellects, are sometimes bewildered in dullness and stupidity, and a Homer nods with all the drowsiness of a Bavius.

There are, in consequence of the unequal power of exertion which the mind experiences, inequalities of excellence in every author, whether ancient or modern. The most admired productions have some parts, in which not only no merit is visible, but which abound with faults. It can neither be supposed, that the failures arise from real and inherent inability, or that they are voluntary. Their authors acknowledged excellencies in other performances, will not admit the former ; and their solicitude for the success of their works must exclude the latter supposition. Such an effect can, therefore, be attributed to no cause, but the unaccountable inequalities of the finest genius, at different hours, and in different situations.

The English can boast a numerous train of writers, who, in their several departments, have approached very nearly to the standard of perfection : but scarcely one of them can be named, whose works are not deformed
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by compositions utterly unworthy of him. It is hardly credible, that the author of *Paradise Lost* could have produced some of those sonnets which pass under his name, but which bear no mark of his genius. Dryden who wrote the ode on Cecilia's day, composed a set of wretched tragedies in rhyme; the ode was, indeed, dictated by genius, but the tragedies arose from no other inspiration than that of want.

In this point, as well as in many others, there is an exact analogy between the moral and literary world. It has long been the complaint of the experienced, that no human foresight, no prudence, can at all times ensure prosperity, and avert ill-fortune. Something still arises to baffle the counsels of the wise, and to counteract the intentions of the good. The Roman satirist has indeed asserted, that Fortune is a deity of our own creation, and that he, who submits to the guidance of prudence, needs not the interposition of any supernatural power; but experience proves the assertion to be rather the effusion of a rigid and affected philosophy, than the cool suggestion of well-informed reason. The observation of a sacred moralist, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, is more agreeable to truth, and has been confirmed by the repeated testimony of some thousand years. Wisdom is often found guilty of folly, and ingenuity of error.

Of the fluctuation of mental vigour in the same individual, there is a remarkable instance in the great Newton. Of him it is said, that, in the advanced period of his life, he was unable to comprehend his own works. That understanding, which once penetrated far beyond the limits of the visible creation, became so debilitated, as to be incapable of retracing its own progress: a memorable instance of human infirmity, sufficient to humble pride, and silence envy.

As merit cannot always ensure success, even in the exertion of its peculiar excellence, so is it by no means certain of obtaining a good reception in the world: for history and experience furnish many examples to prove, that wealth and power are not the necessary consequences of wisdom and virtue. To be wise and

virtuous,

virtuous, may be learned from an Epictetus; to be fortunate, from others.

It might indeed be supposed, that strength of intellects, accuracy of judgment, and extensive erudition, would either secure to themselves good fortune, or would, at least, be rewarded by the world; but it is an incontestable truth, that poets and philosophers, of every age and every nation, have been almost as much distinguished by their indigence, as their ingenuity. Poverty and poetry are almost synonymous, while the unerring experience of mankind has reduced it to a proverb, that "fools have fortune."

The insufficiency of merit, and of honest endeavours, to the acquisition of fame and fortune, has given occasion to the discontented to repine, and to censure the œconomy of human affairs; but they, who are conversant in the investigation of final causes, easily perceive, that such a dispensation tends to perfect virtue, by the exercise of patience.

All sublunary excellence is indeed transitory. Not only the external goods of fortune, but the mental advantages, which are commonly represented as out of the reach of accident, are subject to decay and perpetual fluctuation. They who labour to ascend the heights of virtue and learning, often relapse in their passage, or fall at once from the summit when it is attained. If then neither wisdom, knowledge, genius, nor virtue, are stable and stationary, we must learn not to confide in them with presumptuous security, but to put our whole trust, where alone it can repose without danger, *even on the rock of ages.*

NO. XXXII. MEN OF GENIUS DO NOT ALWAYS EXCEL IN COMMON CONVERSATION. IN A LETTER.

WHEN you were with me last, I remember you expressed your surprise, that Varus, who has indubitable marks of true genius in his writings, appeared utterly destitute of spirit and vivacity in conversation. You seemed at a loss to account for the dulness of a man, whose pages are replete with wit and humour; and you were astonished to find, that he who had engaged in the deepest disquisitions with all the subtilty of argument, appeared unable to support a trifling conversation on the common topics of the day. You did not perhaps recollect, that great minds can exert themselves with full force only on great occasions. Either from pride, disuse, or natural inability, poets and philosophers are known to appear inferior in the arts of conversation, and the little decencies of common life, to the illiterate beau, and the superficial female.

It has been said, you know, that they who are employed in sublime speculations, learn to despise every subordinate object as unworthy their regard or cultivation. Where this is really the case, it is easy to account for the awkwardness of men of wit and letters: for it is impossible to bestow pains in the acquisition of what we despise: but your own, as well as my experience, will furnish instances of those who have thought it a misfortune not to be able to shine at the tea-table as well as in the schools. A man of this character, though he can trace a syllem through all its mazes, is often incapable of expatiating on the common subjects of a new play, a new farce, a new ministry, with tolerable accuracy or politeness.

One might naturally suppose, however, that when at last these exalted personages condescend to open
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their lips, something uncommonly excellent would come out; but we often, in other instances as well as in this, indulge our expectations farther than reason and experience seem to justify. The greatest men are still but men, and, in the common intercourse of life, are of necessity upon a level with the vulgar. I dare say, you remember a shrewd remark of a writer, whose name I cannot recollect, That no great man ever appeared great in the eyes of his *valet-de-chambre*. In truth, many objects in the moral, as well as natural world, seem larger when viewed imperfectly and obscurely. The meteor which strikes the distant beholder with fear and astonishment, is found, upon a nearer view, to be nothing but a vapour; and the philosopher, who is the object of awe and veneration among those who never approach him, becomes, when closely inspected in the humble occupations of common life, little more than a common man.

Life has often been compared to a Drama, and the world to a Stage. I believe the subject we have been now considering will increase the resemblance. Various indeed are the characters when they appear on the public Stage; but when they retire behind the scenes, and put off the glittering outside which fascinated beholders, the monarch, the hero, the philosopher, are found in those common weaknesses which humiliate their aspiring nature, to be more nearly on a level with the peasant, than their pride is willing to allow.

It has been said, that one man is capable of excelling others, in qualities superinduced by his own efforts, as much as the species of man surpasses the species of brutes. This indeed is apparently true; yet he who expects to find the most improved individuals uniformly excellent, knows little of human nature. A Grandison is scarcely less fabulous than a phoenix.

All sorts of excellencies can never be united in one man. The world is unreasonable when it expects, that they who write well should always shine in the little arts of convivial intercourse. It is enough, that their minds are engaged in subjects of importance, and that they are both able and willing to communicate their meditations to the Public. Few have written better

than Addison, yet Addison was remarkable for taciturnity. He was however, we are told, agreeable and talkative among select friends and men of letters. In truth, conversation cannot be long supported with spirit, but among equals in point of abilities and attainments; and men of great genius and profound learning do not often meet their equals in mixed society.

No. XXXIII. VERBAL CRITICISM UNDERSERVEDLY DESPISED. IN A LETTER.

I Cannot help thinking you were too severe in what you said against those critics who have employed themselves in verbal disquisitions. You well know, that ridicule can make things, of acknowledged utility, appear vain and frivolous. And to tell you the truth, I believe, you do not keep your exquisite talent for ridicule under that restraint which candour and moderation seem to require.

I must indeed allow, that Verbal Criticism, like many other laudable pursuits, is apt to deviate into absurdity, when not under the regulation of reason and good sense. Enquiries into the works of nature are highly useful and pleasing; but even these have been perverted by ignorance and bigotry, and have produced those disgraces of the human mind, alchemy and judicial astrology. Investigations of the manners and institutions of antiquity are known to promote knowledge, by ascertaining ambiguous subjects, and to give pleasure, by gratifying a natural curiosity; these however have likewise degenerated into all those absurdities which form the character of the pedantic antiquarian, and the trifling virtuoso.

When you censure verbal critics, you certainly forget how much you are indebted to them. Believe me, you would never have had that general acquaintance with the classics, had you been obliged to toil through all those difficulties, which the Commentators, at the revival of learning, took such pains to remove. Re-

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seued from the cells of Monks, whose mind were as dark as their habitations, the manuscripts of antient authors were full of errors and interpolations, and it was impossible to read a page of many celebrated writings, without being embarrassed with obscurity and impeded by chasms, which collation or conjecture only could supply. You may laugh, if you please, at the phlegmatic disposition of those who could go through the drudgery of collating a dozen manuscript copies, to find the proper place of a conjunction or an adverb, yet, however merry you may be on the occasion, you will be obliged to acknowledge the utility of the labour. I am aware, that these pains-taking students have been stigmatized with appellations of the lowest kind, and that they have been called porters in the republic of letters, and their works, the scaffoldings of literature: but let it be remembered, that though the greatest share of praise be due to the architect, yet will his plans and models, however ingeniously formed, avail but little, without the co-operation of the labourer, and the assistance of the scaffold.

But without insisting on the advantage derived from this kind of criticism, in the illustration of antient authors, I think it evident, that it deserves cultivation, were it only because it contributes to ascertain, and to refine our own language.

If you review the state of Literature, you will find few writers who have attained an elegance in their own language, before it has been examined by grammarians, and reduced to fixed rules of analogy. Strength and vigour they may perhaps have displayed, since these are the genuine products of natural genius. But to the most animated sentiments, and nervous expressions, they have been unable to add the grace of a correct and polished style.

If then we make pretensions to taste, and prefer elegance to deformity, and perspicuity to confusion, we must not refuse, to verbal criticism, that praise which we readily bestow on the other parts of literature.

The world has long been prejudiced against compilers of Dictionaries, and has viewed them rather in the light of elaborate plodders, than of men of taste

and genius; but candour must confess, that learning is more indebted to Dictionaries and Lexicons, than to any other production whatever; since, without these, the ancient writings, those sources of literature, must have remained unintelligible. The English language has been enriched by the Shakespeares, the Miltons, the Lockes of former times; but it may with truth be said, to have been refined and embellished by the grammarians and the great lexicographer of the present age. It is from the labours of verbal critics, that our language will receive the only excellences it wanted, purity and correctness.

NO. XXXIV. ON THE NECESSITY AND METHOD OF ENCOURAGING IN THE COMMUNITY THE PREVALENCE OF VIRTUOUS LOVE.

THE passion of love possesses an influence on life so extensive and important, that the moralist, who takes it not into consideration, is guilty of a great omission. Virtuous love is not only attended with the sweetest pleasures which this life affords, but is highly conducive to the improvement of human nature. Like the sun in the spring, whose warmth calls forth the latent powers of vegetation, love excites and cherishes some of those amiable dispositions, which would otherwise have remained for ever in a concealed and a torpid state. It often improves the understanding no less than the heart, and the transformation which Iphigenia is said to have produced in Cymon, is neither unnatural nor uncommon.

But it seems to be a just complaint, that virtuous love is of late much less frequent than it has been, and than it ought to be. A very gross passion, which usurps the name of love, but which, instead of improving the heart or the faculties, degrades them both, is become more universal and more licentious.

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Where lust and libertinism greatly prevail, the hearts of the people at large are too debauched to be able to entertain a virtuous passion for a single object. Thus marriage is avoided as a restraint, or, if it is sought, it is sought from interest alone. But the greater part of women are not blest with the gifts of fortune. How then are they to be entered into a state, for which God, and nature, and reason, and virtue, evidently designed them? Their whole dependence for nuptial felicity, and indeed for the accomplishment of one great end of their existence, must rest on the power they possess of exciting a virtuous affection: a poor dependence, according to the state of morals in this age! for, with all the graces of personal beauty, and the superior charms of delicacy and sense, virtuous women will be slighted, and even despised, by the greater number of young men, who even glory in having blasted the budding blossoms of love in the pestilential air of a brothel, and who have sacrificed those first fine sensibilities, which return no more, to some infamous and impure prostitute. So the rose of beauty and of innocence is left to bloom and decay. He who should admire it, love it, and take it to his bosom, turns away to cull the noisome weed which stings him while he touches it, and ultimately poisons both his body and his mind.

I wish it were in the power of the moralist to restore the rights of female innocence and beauty, and to relume the lamp of virtuous love. The virtue and happiness of both sexes would be greatly augmented by such an event. It seems, indeed, that it would be peculiarly favourable to female dignity, upon which the good morals of the world greatly depend. For whatever authority the men may claim, experience has uniformly proved, that the affairs of the world are greatly influenced by the women. If their minds are properly improved, and their sentiments duly exalted, the great influence they possess will be directed to promote all that can render life more dignified and comfortable. But if they unite in increasing profligacy, or do not exert themselves to oppose it, that profligacy will be extreme. They should openly profess, not only to pursue virtue, and all that is laudable in

themselves, but to value those men most, who most excel in virtue and in laudable qualities. They may rest assured, that, when they cease to listen to licentious love, they will be courted with all the ardour and veneration of a pure and a virtuous heart. They will rise in the ideas of the lover, and will appear to deserve the epithet of angelic, which he now often bestows on them merely in derision.

The neglected ladies may confide, that the mutual passion of the sexes is too powerful to be overcome by any human art. But it may be ill directed, and taught to defeat its natural purpose. And here it must be confessed, that the rare appearance of virtuous love, and the neglect which virtuous women experience in this age, are in great measure imputable to the increase of female prostitution. Young men are allowed great liberties by the foolish indulgence of parents, and they cannot use those liberties in walking the streets, without being solicited to gratify and pall those passions, which were meant to give ardour and perseverance to a virtuous affection. It is but too probable, that the majority will listen to the syren song; and the very first debauch will take off that keen edge of sensibility which would have led to a laudable connection. In vain is some beautiful, accomplished, and innocent creature, recommended to the young heir by his parents, and her own beauty and merit. He declares himself averse from marriage. But why? From reason and principle? The truth is, that he has lost his sensibilities in the haunts of vice, and will not marry till a rottenness of bones, and a dissipation of fortune, have rendered a nurse and a dowry desirable. But had he never fallen into the snares of the prostitute, he would have retained his natural affection, and could not have resisted youth, beauty, and elegance united. Some happy maid, who is now left to pine away in celibacy, would triumphantly have dragged the willing captive to the altar; but he has learned a degree of cunning in the regions of old Drury, which teaches him to defy beauty, and to despise the very idea of matrimony, but as it may tend to the augmentation of his fortune. With his cunning, he has probably gained diseases
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and debility, which are better adapted to raise a nausea than to conciliate affection. The inference I mean to draw from these remarks is, that the public good requires, that the vigilance of the magistrate should be faithfully exerted in diminishing the number of prostitutes. Instead of which it has been sometimes insinuated, by the unprincipled politicians of this world, that they are politically necessary.

I cannot help thinking also, that the restraints of law, which, through the interposition of avarice and ambition, have been laid on marriage, have greatly contributed to discourage virtuous love, and to promote debauchery. The marriage-act, it is said, is justified by the example of foreign nations; but so also is arbitrary power, and there are few acts, which, in their nature and spirit, tend more to despotism than the marriage-act. But, omitting to consider it in a political light, I shall view it for a moment as it affects the morals of the sexes. Men marry, and ought indeed to marry, from the influence of love, as well as from the dictates of prudence. Let us then suppose the case of two young and virtuous persons powerfully struck with each other's agreeable qualities, and deeply in love. If they could be married without delay, and without a tedious attention to a variety of troublesome and expensive formalities, it is highly probable they would immediately marry. If they have not self-command, the consequences of being obliged to postpone a legal union are such as terminate in shame and ruin. If they resolve to go through all the forms of the marriage-act, and to wait years for the accomplishment of their wishes (since poor human nature cannot consistently keep alive any of its better passions during a very long time), the lover cools, or finds new objects, or learns to gratify his sensual appetites where no restraints are required. The maid is forsaken, and the lover corrupted. Had they been married, both might have been happy and useful members of society. Marriage tends greatly to promote virtue of every sort; not only as it furnishes a lawful and natural mode of gratifying the passions, but as it calls forth industry, and renders a good character and the esteem of others

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desirable, because necessary to the support of a family. But though I will venture to assert, that the multiplication of restraints on the proper intercourse of the sexes naturally tends to promote an improper intercourse (since an intercourse there must be), yet I will add, that alterations in an act, in which the domestic happiness of every family in the kingdom is interested, should not take place, but after the coolest deliberation, and the testimony of long and decisive experience. Villains, there is no doubt, will avail themselves of a freedom from restraint, to allure the incautious female into matrimony, merely for the sake of her fortune, which will perhaps be expended in supporting a courtesan. Surely some precaution must be taken by human laws to prevent this cruel species of robbery. To rob a father of his child, and then to forsake or injure that child!—none but a father can feel the agonizing pang that rises on the reflection.

The best method of increasing virtuous love, is to pay peculiar attention to the moral and religious education of both the sexes. Polite and learned accomplishments are often attended to in such a manner as to exclude the formation of virtuous principles. As to the education of girls, in particular, it has been severely though truly said, that many of them are trained as if they were to be prostitutes by profession. They are often left unacquainted with economical management, or with any one art that can render them useful. The higher classes are totally at a loss even in the first management of their offspring; and it is not to be wondered at, if they, who know not how to be wives, are soon degraded to the rank of harlots. A proper education, consisting of moral, religious, literate, and economical instruction, cannot fail to make them set a due value on themselves, and to enable them to pursue the methods most consistent with their dignity and happiness. She who is taught to say her prayers with constancy and devotion, and to value the testimony of a good conscience, will at once be rendered a fitter object of virtuous love, and less inclined to encourage any other. She will be respected as well as loved, as capable of becoming a valuable wife, and not merely courted with the
wantonness

wantonness of transitory desire, to which a long indifference and disgust frequently succeed.

The women, it must be owned, are in this age greatly their own enemies. It is a just complaint, that the men are less sensible of their beauty and accomplishments than they ought to be. But it must be remembered, that such is the nature of man, that he despises every good which is too obvious and too plentiful. The women have confessedly laid aside *reserve*. The men have, by a natural consequence, suspended their admiration. Ease and forwardness of address, and excessive familiarity, are established by the law of fashion; and neglect and contempt follow by the law of nature. Woman was designed to be pursued, and not to pursue. A veil increases beauty, and reserve both exalts and preserves love by mixing it with respect. Where there is no respect, there is no virtuous love. What looks like it, is a devil in an angel's form, even lust: an indelicate name indeed; but let it be remembered, that to bestow good names on bad things is to give them a passport in the world, under a delusive disguise.

The understandings of women are perhaps in every respect equal to those of men when equally cultivated. It requires indeed no great share of sagacity to perceive that they are greatly interested in diffusing among the men the ardour and sincerity of a virtuous love. Their understandings and hearts are both well able to accomplish this important purpose. I offer only imperfect hints. They will improve upon them, and shew their utility by giving them real efficacy. I doubt not but that, upon reflection, they will be as desirous as they are able, to stop the progress of female corruption by means very different from the establishment of polygamy.

NO. XXXV. HINTS TO THOSE WHO ARE DESIGNED FOR THE LIFE OF WHAT IS CALLED A GENTLEMAN WITHOUT A PROFESSION.

TO inherit an affluent fortune, and to be exempted from the vulgar cares of life, seems to be a lot peculiarly favourable to the advancement and the security of human happiness. The greater number of men are compelled by necessity to proceed in the same road, without liberty to deviate or select the objects of their attention; but the rich heir beholds the world, and all that it contains, placed like a plentiful feast before him, and appears to have little else to do, but to reach out his hand, and to take what he finds most agreeable to his taste.

Such a lot is usually envied; but it is really not happier than others. Providence is not so partial, as, on a first and a cursory view, it appears to be. It seems indeed to establish a kind of equilibrium of happiness. And experience evinces, that caprice, false delicacy, artificial wants, vanity, pride, covetousness, and envy, usually render the lives of the rich and unemployed, not in the least more pleasurable than the condition of the honest, healthy, and industrious poor.

It is however certain, that to inherit an independent fortune is in itself a noble privilege, and that it ought to be highly conducive to real enjoyment. I shall therefore beg leave to offer a few hints to those, who are setting out in life with the distinguished advantage of a rich inheritance. As all the real benefit of such a condition depends on the judicious use of it, if the moralist can point out means to secure that point, he may be said to contribute more to the improvement of the young man's estate, than if he procured a subscription to a loan, or put him in a way to make ten *per cent.* of his money.

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In the first place, I hope the young man will not be so mistaken in his ideas of happiness as to imagine, that he can be happy in doing nothing. Universal and unvaried experience has proved, that he who does nothing is a wretch. The same experience has declared it probable, that he will not only be miserable but wicked.

He must resolve to render himself useful on two accounts: first, because it is a duty he owes the community in return for the protection of his person and property; and, secondly, because it is a duty he owes to himself to be as happy as possible: and this cannot be, notwithstanding all the real and pretended gratifications of riches, without useful activity. It will not be enough to make him enjoy the internal pleasures of reflection, merely to have dressed well, to have danced at a ball, presided at a horse-race, or driven a phaeton. Riding a shewy horse, whipping a pair of low geldings from a high four-wheeled chaise, and sauntering in a stable, are indeed, in the present age, some of the most glorious methods of spending the sprightly days of youth, when privileged by the early possession of a fortune. But when I see the phaeton whisking by, and the lazy youth lolling on its side, I cannot help thinking the man at the tail of the plough a more useful, happy, and respectable member of society. There is not, indeed, the least impropriety in these pleasures, when pursued merely as a temporary relaxation; but all, who know any thing of the world, will agree with me, that young men of fortune frequently, in these times, make grooms their companions, a stable their study, and the driving a horse, or a pair of horses, the utmost extent of their activity, as a high phaeton is the summit of their ambition.

But what, says the young heir, have I to do but to amuse myself? I have no trade, no profession, nor any necessity for either. Why may I not divert myself with any trifle which can excite my attention? But are you sure, I will ask in return, that you have no necessary employment, to the performance of which, according to your abilities, you are as much obliged by duty, reason, honour, and conscience, as the labourer

bourer is bound to finish the work for which he is hired? I believe I can point out some laudable occupations, in which you ought to engage, and in comparison of which, the driving of a phaeton, the vanity of dress and ten thousand other vanities, will appear as the playthings of an infant.

The first object of a youth, who possesses affluence acquired by his forefathers, should be the improvement of his mind. Without this, young man, whatever may be your money, and whatever your titles, if you have any, you will be a poor, mean, contemptible, and pitiful creature. You must read; you must select your reading with judgment, and reflect upon it with long and serious attention. You must acquire a taste for moral philosophy, and learn to curb your overbearing insolence, and all other irregularities of your temper and your passions. For it is a shame to make use of your riches and your grandeur merely to assume a licence for degrading yourself to a brute. You must, in a word, have a liberal education; an education not only liberal in name, but really polite, learned, and comprehensive. You will find your nature raised by it, and yourself become a superior being, in comparison with what you would have been without it. It will exalt you in real dignity more than a ducal coronet. In conjunction with wealth or honours, or both, it will render you the blessing and the glory of your country. Remember also, that, if you slight religion, that Providence which gave you riches, will punish your ingratitude by rendering them a curse.

After a youth spent in preparation, in the study of the classics, of moral and natural philosophy, and in the correction of the temper and the disorders of the passions, it will be time to enter on the proper employments of a mature age. You will very laudably desire to have a share in the legislation; you will take upon you the office of a justice of peace; you will be ready at all times to sit in judgment on the dearest rights of your countrymen as a jurymen; you will willingly assume the office of guardian to public charities, inspector of public works, giving your time and your presence for the public benefit: a gift often more

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valuable than a pecuniary benefaction. You will use your influence to enquire into and to correct abuses of trust, to remove nuisances, to improve roads, to build bridges, to repair public buildings, and to encourage all works of national ornament and utility.

These may constitute your public employments. You have many of a private nature scarcely less necessary. I would recommend it to you to live, if not the whole year, yet all that part of it which is not necessary to be spent near the senate-house, on your own estate in the country. Condescend to look into your affairs, and into all the more important matters of œconomy yourself. This will employ you well, and will prevent injustice to your tradesmen, and embarrassment to yourself and your offspring. It will prevent that ruin, which, at this time, stalks over the land, and diffuses desolation. You will study to improve agriculture: a delightful employment, and capable of producing great advantages, since agriculture has long been in the hands of those, who, from the obstinacy of ignorance, oppose all attempts to introduce new methods of cultivation. You will adorn your grounds with plantations, and not forget to drop the acorn, which is to supply your country with her future bulwarks.

You will adopt something of the old British hospitality. You will, indeed, do right to select your guests; for indiscriminate hospitality tends only to promote gluttony and discourage merit. Men of learning, and all good men, for your own sake and for theirs, ought to claim your exclusive favour. Let your feasts be feasts where the mind, as well as the palate, may be delighted. Discountenance the profligacy of your neighbours by the silent but powerful reproof of neglect. Be not carried away by the fascination of fashion and grandeur, but love and cherish merit in all its obscurities.

Free from all professional avocations, you will have ample leisure to attend to your family; a field well fitted for the display of the best virtues and most valuable qualities. Every family is a little community, and he, who governs it well, supports a very noble character, that of the *pater familias*, or the patriarch.

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The proper management of the various tempers and dispositions which compose large families, the reformation of abuses, the correction of errors, the teaching of duties, will by themselves claim a considerable share of your time and attention. But, if you have many children, you need never want employment. The care and instruction of them, in all the various duties and departments, might very honourably fill a life. You must beware of falling into a common and fatal error among the favourites of fortune, that of thinking domestic pleasures, cares, and duties, beneath their attention.

Though you have no appointed profession, let your assumed profession be to do good, of every sort and in every degree, as far as you are able. The world abounds with evil, moral, natural, real, and imaginary. He alone who does all he can, wherever his influence extends, to mitigate and remove it, is the *true gentleman*. Others are only esquires, knights, baronets, barons, viscounts, earls, marquises, dukes, and kings.

NO. XXXVI. THE WANT OF PERSONAL
BEAUTY A FREQUENT CAUSE OF VIRTUE
AND HAPPINESS.

IT has been justly said, that no one ever despised beauty who possessed it. It is, indeed, a noble privilege to be able to give pleasure, wherever one goes, merely by one's presence, and without the trouble of exertion. The respect which is paid to beauty, and the recommendation it gives to all our good qualities, are circumstances sufficiently advantageous to render the person, who has been blest with it, sincerely grateful.

But the majority of mankind, if they are not deformed, are yet not beautiful. And this is a wise and benevolent dispensation of Providence; for, notwithstanding

standing the just pretensions of beauty, I am convinced, that the want of it is often attended with great benefit to society. Man is naturally desirous of rendering himself, in some respect, valuable and amiable; and, if he has nothing external to recommend him, will endeavour to compensate his defect by the acquisition of internal excellence. But that the virtues of the heart, and the abilities of the understanding, contribute much more to public benefit than any personal accomplishment, is a truth which needs no illustration.

It is indeed a well-known fact, that many of the best poets, philosophers, writers, and artists, have been of the number of those who were, in some measure, prevented in their youth from indulging idleness and profligacy, either by some constitutional infirmity, or by the want of those personal graces, which are the greatest allurements to a life of dissipation. Among a thousand instances, in confirmation of this truth, I will select that of Pope; to the deformity and imbecility of whose body we may attribute his early and constant application to poetry. Where there are powerful solicitations to the pleasures of sense, very little attention will be paid to the pure delights of contemplation and benevolence.

But it is more particularly my design to point out some advantages attending the want of beauty in women: a want which will always be considered by them as a misfortune. But all misfortunes admit of consolation; and many of them, under a judicious conduct, may be metamorphosed into blessings. While, however, I consider the advantages attending the want of personal charms, I must not be understood to undervalue beauty. If we admire the lifeless works of art, much more should we be delighted with the assemblage of living features, in which are united symmetry and expression. It is nature's command that we should be charmed with her productions, both animate and inanimate; and our hearts are most willingly obedient when she bids us admire beauty in our own species. Taste, fancy, and affection, are then all at once most powerfully assaulted, and it would be as unnatural as it is in vain to resist, by refusing our admiration.

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But after our admiration is over, we shall find, when we exercise our reflection and judgment, what experience has indeed proved, that plain women are often entitled to the most esteem. It may appear paradoxical, but I will assert it to be true, that women who have no great pretensions to beauty, are usually found, as the companions of life, the most agreeable. They are indeed, for the most part, I do not say always, the best daughters, the best wives, the best mothers; most important relations, and most honourable to those who support them with propriety. They who aim not at such characters, but live only to display a pretty face, can scarcely rank higher than a painted doll, or a blockhead, placed with a cap on it, in a milliner's window.

There is something of an irritability in the constitution of women whose minds are uncultivated, which, when encreased by opposition, and confirmed by habit, usually produces a termagant, a shrew, or a virago: characters which, from the torment they occasion, may be said greatly to participate of an infernal nature. Nothing but reading, reflection, and indeed what is called a liberal education, can in general smooth this natural asperity. A woman who, by attending to her face, is led to neglect the mind, and who, besides, has been flattered in her youth by the admirers of her beauty, seldom fails, in the more advanced periods of her life, to vent the virulence of her temper, now soured and blackened by neglect, on all who have the misfortune to approach her. Her husband, if she has peradventure entangled some miserable wight, undergoes such torments as might justly rescue him from purgatory, by the plea of already having suffered it.

But folly and ignorance are almost as pregnant with domestic misery as a bad temper. And how shall she avoid folly and ignorance, with all their train of whims, fickleness, fears, false delicacies, vanity, pride, affectation, envy, peevishness, fretfulness, childishness, and *weakness of nerves*, who has spent all the days when she was young, and all the days she thought herself young, at her toilette, and under the hands of the fiskeur? She found herself admired wherever she went, without saying or
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doing any thing admirable. She has therefore saved herself the trouble of forming a taste for reading, or a habit of thinking. But beauty is a rose which soon withers. She loses the power of pleasing others; and, alas! possesses none to please herself, which can supply the place of flattery and pretended adoration. As her life began and continued in folly, so it ends in misery. If she married, she was useless at least, and probably tormenting to her husband. If she continued unmarried, she possessed few qualities to render her acquaintance solicited, and none that could afford her a rational amusement in solitude.

It may indeed happen, that a beautiful woman may be educated with uncommon vigilance, that she may possess a remarkably good understanding, and as good a disposition. In this case her beauty will be doubly valuable, not only from its real excellence when combined with a cultivated understanding, but from the difficulty of attending to the graces of the mind amidst the cares of the person, and the flattery of foolish admirers. It is certainly possible, that a beautiful woman may be as accomplished as a plain woman, and I know that, in this age, there are many instances of it; but I am speaking of probabilities, and I think it much more probable, that women who are not remarkably beautiful, will be, in general, better furnished with those two necessary ingredients to domestic happiness, a corrected temper, and a cultivated understanding.

Let us suppose a case, for the sake of exemplifying the subject, and let it be something like the following. A young lady, whose person is plain, cannot help observing how much she is neglected at public assemblies, and what universal attention is paid to beauty. She will naturally feel a desire to partake of the respect. She revolves in her mind the most likely methods of accomplishing her purpose. As to her features, it is in vain to think of altering them. She must draw her resources from her mind and her temper. She will study to collect ideas, in order to render her conversation agreeable. She will therefore read, and observe, and reflect, and remember. Her eager desire to gain esteem will stimulate her industry, and give steadiness to her application.

tion With these she cannot fail to succeed. Her mind will be stored with knowledge, which will produce itself in conversation with all the graces of ease and elegance. The improvement of her mind will have a natural effect in the improvement of her temper; for every part of polite learning tends to soften and humanize the disposition. But she will also pay particular attention to the regulation of her temper; for she will justly argue, that envy and ill-nature will add distortion and ugliness to a set of features originally not worse than plain or indifferent. She will study to compensate her defects, not only by rendering herself intelligent and good-tempered, but useful. She will therefore study the practical parts of domestic œconomy; those parts of humble but valuable knowledge, with which a fine lady, with a fine face, would scorn to meddle, lest she should be defiled. Thus sensible, good tempered, and useful, her company would be sought by men of sense and character; and, if any one of them should be disposed to marry, I have little doubt but that she would be his choice, in preference to a mere beauty, who has scarcely one excellent or useful quality to render her a good wife, mother, and mistress of a family.

Suppose our plain lady married. Her gratitude will be powerfully excited in return for the preference given to her amidst so many others who are talked of, and toasted, and admired. All her attention will be bestowed in making the man happy, who has made her happy in so flattering a manner. Her understanding has been enlightened, and her temper sweetened by her own exertions. She will therefore be an entertaining as well as tender and affectionate companion. She has been accustomed to solid pleasures, for her plain person secluded her from vanity. She therefore seeks and finds comfort at home. She is not always wishing to frequent the places of public amusement, but thinks the day happily closed, if she can look back and find no domestic duty omitted.

Suppose her a mother. As she has furnished herself with ideas, she will be able to impart them to her children. She will teach them to entertain a proper knowledge of the world, and not lead them, by her example,

to admire only its vanities. She will be able to educate her daughters completely, and to initiate and improve her sons. In the mean time, the fine lady, who has been taught to idolize her own face, and to doat on vanity, will neither be able nor willing to interest herself in such disagreeable matters as the care of her noisy children, whom she almost detests, since they make her look old as they grow up, and are an impediment to her extravagance and dissipation. At the age of thirty or forty, whether of the two is the more amiable? Who now takes notice of the plain lady's face, or the handsome lady's beauty? The plain lady, in all probability, is esteemed, and the handsome lady pitied or despised. But this is not all; for the one is happy and useful, the other burthenfome and miserable.

Juvenal, in his celebrated satire on the vanity of human wishes, laments that the accomplishment of our wishes would often be the cause of our destruction, and that such are our prayers, that, if heaven were always propitious, it would often be unkind. Who wishes not beauty in his children? Yet beauty has been the bane of myriads, whom plainness, or even deformity, might have saved from ruin, and rendered useful, happy, and respectable.

I have thus attempted, in this paper, to console that very worthy part of the sex, who have not to boast the finest tincture of a skin, nor the most perfect symmetry of shape and features, and who are often not only neglected, but even ridiculed by the unfeeling man of pleasure. It is surely a comfortable reflection, that, though nature has treated their persons rather rudely, her apparent malignity may be turned to a benefit; and that a very plain system of features may really be the cause of rendering them more engaging, and more permanently happy, as well as better able to communicate happiness, than the most celebrated taff, whose mind is unimbellished. She indeed may shine a little while in the fashionable sphere, while she exhibits the transitory gloss of novelty, but will soon drop her honours, like the gaudy tulip, and be no more remembered.

No. XXXVII. ON AN EXCESSIVE AND IN-
DISCRIMINATE LOVE OF COMPANY, AND
AN ABHORRENCE OF OCCASIONAL SOLI-
TITUDE.

THERE are few conditions less desirable than that of the man who has no resources in himself, and who is totally dependent on others for his daily amusement. Yet there are great numbers who consider solitude as synonymous with misery, and who are ready to associate with any company, rather than be left alone. This weakness, for a great weakness it is, renders the mind base and mean enough to submit to any neglect, coolness, or contempt, in order to be admitted into a party, or not to be excluded from a dinner. It is the cause and the consequence of a feverish and restless state, totally inconsistent with solid comfort and rational enjoyment.

The love of company and of social pleasures is indeed natural, and attended with some of the sweetest satisfactions of human life; but, like every other love, when it proceeds beyond the limits of moderation, it ceases to produce its natural effect, and terminates in disgustful satiety. The foundation-stone and the pillar, on which we build the fabric of our felicity, must be laid in our own hearts. Amusement, mirth, agreeable variety, and even improvement, may be sometimes sought in the gaiety of mixed company, and in the usual diversions of the world; but, if we found our general happiness on these, we shall do little more than raise castles in the air, or build houses on the sand.

To derive the proper pleasure and improvement from company, it ought to be select, and to consist of persons of character, respectable both for their morals and their understandings. Mixed and undistinguished society tends only to dissipate our ideas, and induce a laxity of principles and practice. The pleasure it af-

fords is of a coarse, mixed, noisy, and rude kind. Indeed, it commonly ends in weariness and disgust, as even they are ready to confess, who yet constantly pursue it, as if the chief good consisted in living in a crowd.

Among those, indeed, who are exempted by their circumstances from professional and official employments, and who professedly devote themselves to a life of pleasure, little else seems to constitute the idea of it, but an unceasing succession of company, public or private. The dress, and other circumstances preparatory to the enjoyment of this pleasure, scarcely leave a moment for reflection. Day after day is spent in the same toilsome round, till a habit is formed, which renders dissipation necessary to existence. One week without it would probably induce a lowness of spirits, which might terminate in despair and suicide. When the mind has no anchor, it will suffer a kind of shipwreck; it will sink in whirlpools, and be dashed on rock. What, indeed, is life or its enjoyments without settled principles, laudable purposes, mental exertions, and internal comfort? It is merely a vapour, or to drop the language of figure on so serious a subject, it is a state worse than non-entity, since it possesses a restless power of action productive of nothing but misery.

I very seriously recommend, therefore, to all who wish to enjoy their existence, (and who entertains not that wish?) that they should acquire not only a power of bearing, but of taking a pleasure in temporary solitude. Every one must, indeed, sometimes be alone. Let him not repine when he is alone, but learn to set a value on the golden moments. It is then that he is enabled to study himself and the world around him. It is then that he has an opportunity of seeing things as they are, and of removing the deceitful veil, which almost every thing assumes in the busy scene of worldly employments. The soul is enabled to retire into herself, and to exert those energies, which are always attended with sublime pleasure. She is enabled to see the dependent, frail, and wretched state of man as the child of nature, and incited by her discovery to implore grace and protection
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from the Lord of the universe. They, indeed, who fly from solitude, can seldom be religious; for religion requires meditation. They may be said to live without God in the world; not, it is true, from atheistical principles, but from a carelessness of disposition; a truly deplorable state, the consciousness of which could not fail to cloud the gaiety of those halcyon beings, who sport in the sunshine of unremitted pleasure.

I may, I believe, assert, that the love of pleasure, the follies of fashion, and the extravagancies of dissipation, are greater enemies to religion, than all the writers who have endeavoured to attract notice by attacking Christianity. Many, it is to be feared, have lived and died in the regions of gaiety, without ever having felt a sense of religion. Prayers, sermons, churches, the clergy, and the gospel, were things which never struck them, and from which they received no more impression than a blind man from the exhibition of a pageant. To feel the fine sensibilities of devotion, it is necessary to commune with our own hearts, upon our beds, and to be still. If we had but courage to withdraw ourselves from the world, we should often find in our study, and on our knees, such pleasures as the world cannot give.

I may also add, that few will be found to display prudence or consistency of conduct, who do not sometimes step aside from the tumult of the throng, to consider coolly their circumstances and situation. Life cannot proceed fortuitously without incurring momentary danger. Plans of conduct must be formed, precautions taken, errors retrieved, and the probabilities of futurity considered. But all this requires thought, and thought, retirement.

Not only religion, virtue, and prudence, will be promoted by occasional solitude, but a relish will be given to the rational enjoyments of a pleasurable life. Vicissitude is essential to every state of durable enjoyment. He who has spent a little part of his time in his closet, or in his groves, will partake of the gaieties of the assembly with fresh delight, as a man, when he is hungry, finds an additional flavour in his daily food.

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But it must be remembered, that, in recommending solitude, I mean only occasional solitude. There is no doubt but that man is made for action, and that his duties and pleasures are often most numerous and most important amidst the busy hum of men. Many vices, and many corrupt dispositions, have been fostered in a solitary life. Monkery is not favourable to human nature or human happiness; but neither is unlimited dissipation. Cautions and remedies must always be applied, where the greatest danger appears. And I think it will admit no dispute, but that, in this age and nation, men are much more likely to be injured by too constant an intercourse with the world, than by too much retirement.

But nothing without moderation is durable or wise. Let there be a sweet interchange of retirement and association, of repose and activity. A few hours spent every day by the votaries of pleasure in serious meditation, would render their pleasure pure, and more unmixed with misery. It would give them knowledge, so that they would see how far they might advance in their pursuit without danger; and resolution, so that they might retreat when danger approached. It would teach them how to live; a knowledge, which, indeed, they think they possess already; and it would also teach them, what they are often too little solicitous to learn, how to die.

No. XXXVIII. REFLECTIONS ON THE ART OF PHYSIC.

WE cannot help feeling a pleasure, mixed indeed with severe regret, while we look back on the Antediluvian World, and read the fabulous accounts of a golden age. The absence of that natural evil, which has ever since infused into the cup of human felicity a bitter mixture, must have rendered existence an uninterrupted pleasure, and heightened every actual enjoyment, by admitting the comfortable reflection, that present indulgence was not to be paid for by future pain.

But, alas! the golden age existed only in the regions of poetry. Moral evil soon made its appearance in an animal so imperfect as man, and had an immediate tendency to produce natural. The gratification of the animal appetites was, for obvious reasons, connected with pleasure; and, in order to prolong or improve that pleasure, men had recourse to refinement and excess. These not only superinduced disease, but occasioned an imbecility, that rendered it more difficult to be removed.

Man, furnished by nature with a greater susceptibility of pleasure than was indulged to other animals, was possessed likewise of a superior sagacity, which enabled him to modify and heighten his enjoyments with all the subtlety of art. His boasted reason became the pander of his appetites. A taste for simple food and simple manners, the one the best preservative of health, the other of innocence, was lost amid the acquired advantages of civilization.

The human body, even in the earliest ages, and before the universal prevalence of luxury, was indeed exposed to various diseases. Its complicated organization rendered its motions easy to be retarded or obstructed by the unavoidable influence of an atmosphere. We find that animals, who approach nearly to a state of nature, are yet subject to a variety of distempers. The most useful auxiliary of man is known to labour under many violent disorders, though his food is a pure, vegetable production, presented to him in its highest perfection, and unadulterated by the hand of man. In the infancy of the world, it may reasonably be concluded from analogy, the body was produced in a stronger and sounder state, than after the lapse of many thousand ages, when vice has contaminated the very sources of population. Fresh from the hand of plastic nature, the body was not only more beautiful and proportionate, but less disposed to admit morbid commixtures, and better enabled to expel them. Yet even then, the effects of the weather, of accidents, of long fasting, or repletion, were necessarily felt, and were followed by disease.

Exposed to wants, to external dangers, and internal weaknesses, the impatient mind of man soon applied

itself

itself to the invention of arts, which taught compendious methods of supply, of defence, and of remedy. The use of iron, once discovered, gave him the superiority of a more elevated order of beings over those to whom it continued unknown, and the dominion which he acquired over the brutes, exalted him still higher in the scale of dignity and power. But though labour was facilitated and security obtained, yet neither mechanical ingenuity, nor the protection gained by adventitious power, could allay the heat of a fever, or assuage the violence of pain; evils which attacked him in the hours of his repose, and found their way to him through the walls of the rampart or the castle.

The personal feelings of the sufferer, and the anxiety of those who were most nearly allied to him by the ties of blood and affection, incited the spirit of industry and research to procure alleviation. Charms and amulets were the first expedients suggested to the rude mind of the barbarian, ever more inclined to indulge the delusive hopes of superstition, than to listen to the voice of sober reason. But even these expedients, inadequate as they appeared, were yet often productive of beneficial effects. Many disorders, if not quite imaginary, derived much of their violence from the force of imagination. From the same source their cure was to be obtained. A bead worn a certain time, an insignificant ceremony performed with the rituals of superstition, could not effect any immediate alteration in the animal economy; but they gave ease to the mind of the sufferer, and, by restoring cheerfulness and spirits, often became really efficacious.

Nor were these fanciful methods of cure confined to the ages of ignorance. They who are acquainted with vulgar life, as it appears at present, and the manners of those who reside at a distance from the capital, must have observed a variety of superstitious practices scarcely to be equalled in absurdity by the rudest nations. There are, for instance, many methods of curing an ague, without internal or external application. The poor patient has recourse to some aged matron, who, like the god of physic, professes the arts of medicine and prophecy; and he seeks not the aid of the regular

practitioner, while he can obtain the supernatural assistance of a charm. He waits without reluctance for relief; the disorder decreases by the effects of time and constitutional vigour; the credit of the cure is given to the charm: he recommends it in his turn to others, and superstition prevails in an enlightened age, amid all the triumphs of truth and philosophy.

Medicine was however early cultivated as an art, founded on certain principles, and confided in by the sensible part of mankind as the most probable means of relief. The slaughter of victims for sacrifice, and of animals for food, gave an opportunity of inspecting the parts of organized bodies, which bore a great analogy to the human constitution. Chirurgery and physic derived from this source equal opportunities for improvement. Indeed, it is presumed, that chirurgical operations were the first efforts of the medical art. External maladies, as they were most visible, called more immediately for relief; and external application was the easiest and most obvious to reflection. Both branches of the art, long after its invention, were united in the same professor, as they usually are at present among our rural practitioners. There is indeed sufficient reason for their combination, since a skill in them, must, in great measure, result from a knowledge of the same principles; yet, at the same time, each of them will probably be carried to a greater height, when separately pursued by different persons. This indeed seems to accord with the decisions of experience; for, of those who have arrived at singular eminence in either of these arts, few have chosen to invade the province of the other. Cheselden did not prescribe in a fever, nor did Radcliffe undertake an amputation.

The Greeks, whose happy polity was admirably adapted to call forth all those fine qualities of the mind with which they were singularly furnished by nature, advanced not only the ornamental arts of painting, poetry, and sculpture, to perfection, but cultivated the useful one of physic with a success, which has enabled the moderns to make their boasted improvements. The writings of Hippocrates, though, for obvious reasons,

sons, slighted by the busy practitioner, are held in high estimation by the learned physician. And if the prescriptions of the Cöan seem to want simplicity, and fail of their effect at this period and in our climate; yet have they been of essential service to the art, by introducing what is called the dogmatical method in the place of the empirical; and their failure as remedies may be reasonably attributed to the alterations which the human frame is found to undergo in the revolution of ages, by a general change of dietetic regimen; by removing to different climates, and incorporating with races of men, who seem to be distinguished from the rest even in their bodily organization.

Though the writings of the ancients, of the Grecian Hippocrates and Galen, and of the Arabian Rhazes and Avicenna, are often talked of by the modern professor, yet are they seldom read. Experience, which, after all, is the surest test of utility, seems to justify the neglect. Practical medicine is less indebted to books, than any other liberal art. The occasional varieties of distempers are infinite; their complications disguise them, and often produce a new species, or one that has never been described with accuracy. He who has recourse to systems, is at a stand when he sees a symptom unobserved before; but he who has studied nature in the original, knows how to change his intentions, and adapt endless remedies to the endless variety of disorders. Yet theory should certainly go before practice in the preparation for this profession; and the physician, who has not read a great deal in his youth, will appear not only illiberal but grossly ignorant.

From many similar instances, Radcliffe may be selected to prove, that great practical skill, as well as fame in this art, is attainable merely by the aid of experimental physiology. He indeed, it is said, was a genius in medicine. To books he owed but little, and was ambitious to appear less indebted to them than he really was. He knew, it is true, that experience, the safest guide after the mind is prepared for her instructions by previous institution, is apt, without such preparation, to degenerate to a vulgar and presumptuous empiricism. He therefore laid a foundation of general

and liberal knowledge derived from books, on which he erected a noble superstructure, with materials supplied by observation. He certainly possessed, in an eminent degree, a sagacity which nature had bestowed. But he was not a man of profound and accurate science. Perhaps, like many of his profession, he owed a great part of his fame and fortune to the caprice of fashion, and the concurrence of favourable circumstances. If he did not, by his own discoveries, advance the boundaries of knowledge, he took the wisest methods for its improvement at his death, by the most ample benefactions to the university of Oxford. Through the wisdom of their application, he still continues to promote the benevolent purposes of the medical profession, in a general infirmary, raised there by his posthumous bounty. Science gratefully attributes to the same source, a library and observatory, happily placed in a central situation, whence the streams of knowledge, like the blood circulating from the heart, may be generally diffused. Oxford has indeed been long in possession of advantages favourable to the study of theoretic physic, but scarcely afforded any opportunities for practical information, till the erection of the Radclivian infirmary. And now, since the clinical lecture is established in it, the students will no longer be constrained to seek improvement in the hospitals of the capital, or at a remote university.

Academical honours are conferred on this profession, and it commonly leads to wealth and popular esteem; but it was not so honourable among the Romans as among us, and all the modern nations of Europe. It was commonly in the hands of slaves, and Antonius Musa is almost the only physician in the golden age of learning who is honourably mentioned. With respect to the celebrated Celsus, though a most elegant writer, he is supposed to have flourished at a later period, and under Tiberius. He was not indeed a professed physician. He did not practise physic; but studied it as a liberal scholar in pursuit of universal knowledge. He wrote on philosophical subjects, on civil law, on the military art, and on agriculture. His treatise de Re Medicâ formed but a small part of his ingenious labours,

bours, and is by many considered rather as a translation than an original composition. The honour paid to him, was paid to the scholar and not to the physician only. But in whatever light the profession was formerly viewed, it now possesses the rank and esteem which it deserves. Our physicians have usually united polite learning with physiological knowledge. Many besides Linacre, Mead, Freind, and Akenfide, have been no less celebrated in the schools of humanity than of science, and have been favoured by Apollo as much in their poetical as in their medical capacity.

Harvey, from whom is derived one of the noblest discoveries of modern philosophy, has greatly contributed to promote, among physicians, the cultivation of polite literature, together with the skill peculiar to the medical profession. By instituting an annual Latin oration, he has rendered a knowledge of the elegance of that language necessary to those of the faculty, who are desirous of being distinguished as men of taste. As it might fall to the lot of any individual to speak on St. Luke's day, each has been solicitous of retaining that classical learning, which is too often forgotten, even by men of sense and judgment, soon after their emancipation from scholastic restraint. In pursuit of this end, they have formed a taste for classical works, and have been the patrons, the admirers, and the composers of the most elegant productions. Indeed, in no order are there to be found individuals better informed, more polite, humane, and ingenious, than among the physicians.

At the same time it is but just to add, that there have been great numbers, and some among them not unpopular, who were distinguished only by superior avarice, impudence, folly, ignorance, and affectation; by qualities, which, though they can hardly fail to render them fashionable, are in themselves effeminate and despicable.

It must be confessed, that many of those, whose business it is to combine and administer medicines according to the prescription of others, have, by the benefit of long observation, acquired real skill; and, though they

have not to boast the advantage of a very liberal education, are yet justly esteemed as experimental physicians. These constitute a very numerous class in the community, and as they are commonly appealed to in the first instance, and entirely depended upon by the middle and inferior ranks, their medical influence is, on the whole, more extensive than that of those who hold a higher place in the national estimation.

When we turn our attention to the lowest order of practitioners, empirics and pretenders, we see this noble art most disgracefully perverted. It is indeed much to be lamented, that the inferior and more numerous classes of mankind, who are most exposed to accidents, and who have the fewest alleviations, are constrained by indigence to seek relief from men, who have no other preparation for the exercise of this important art, but the humble employment of macerating drugs in a mortar, tying labels to the necks of phials, conveying medicines to patients, sweeping a warehouse, or kindling the fires of a laboratory. Such are often the most daring in the treatment of maladies, for ignorance is naturally presumptuous. Charity has however stepped in to remedy the evil; and numerous hospitals, scattered over the face of our country, have at once afforded an extensive field for the exertion of beneficence, and the best schools for the improvement of medicine. In these places skilful physicians preside, and the poor have the advantage of regular attendance, of fresh and unadulterated medicines, of proper diet and cleanliness, in a manner highly favourable to cure, and which can hardly be surpassed by the conveniences of opulence.

Like the pretenders to inspiration in religion, there are many who boldly enter on the practice of this art, totally destitute of preparatory instruction, and who make a merit of their defect. Without even those few lights, which may be occasionally obtained in the course of a servile apprenticeship, they assume all the importance or sufficiency, and dictate with an oracular confidence. Against these vultures of mankind, against these harpies of society, who scatter pain and death
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around, under pretence of affording relief; and who, for the sake of supporting an unbecoming parade in life, not only delude, but destroy those who apply to them as to friends, under the pressure of the heaviest calamities, every honest mind must feel an indignant sentiment. The loss occasioned by the deceiver, who preys on the possessions of his fellow-creatures, may be repaired by subsequent industry or good fortune; but deception, in this instance, is usually followed by destruction.

But how shall an evil thus generally felt and complained of, be obviated, without an infringement of civil liberty; that boasted privilege, of which we are sometimes more jealously tenacious than of health and life? Admonition is ineffectual; for of those who suffer, few have not been apprized of the danger of trusting to empiricism.

The progress of empirical fame and success is easily traced, though not easily retarded. A powerful medicine is exhibited to some wretched individual, whose indigence induces him to be grateful for the notice and assistance of the ignorant. If his complaint is removed, as it would otherwise have been by the silent operation of time, he is triumphantly dragged forth to public view, and his name is added to attest the wonderful efficacy of the pretender's nostrum. The regular practitioner is insulted. Facts speak for themselves, and even men of sense hear and believe. The gaping crowd press round the mountebank, and swallow the dose of death with avidity, led on by the sunshine of delusive hope, like the poor fluttering insect, that is allured to its own destruction by a deceitful blaze.

The wisdom and authority of the legislature might, indeed, lessen or remove the evil. But it has never yet interfered, not only from an unwillingness to multiply restraints in a free country, but perhaps from a doubt whether some equivalent advantage may not arise from the liberty of attempting medical experiments. It is a truth somewhat mortifying to the regular votaries of science, that many of the most important discoveries have been made by the ignorant and by chance.

chance. Those who have been taught to adhere to systems are sometimes too much attached to the straight and known path, to permit themselves to venture even on proper deviation. While the uneducated experimentalist, a stranger to the prepossessions unavoidably derived from learning, is almost sure to acquire the merit of originality. Unacquainted with the paths of those who have gone before, he is under a necessity of pursuing a track of his own. He is commonly bewildered, it is true, but yet it sometimes happens, that he finds out a shorter or more agreeable road. In the infinite trials which his boldness instigates him to make, he blunders on a useful discovery, which would never have been known to the more expert and cautious. Unfortunate individuals suffer in the course of his inquiries, but the community at large is sometimes benefited by an accession to experimental knowledge.

In no profession is it more desirable, that there should be examinations previous to a licence to practice. The want of a strict examination will render this profession low and contemptible, which was once highly and deservedly honoured.

It was indeed natural that medicine should be highly honoured, and its first inventors or improvers exalted to gods and demigods. As life itself is of small value without health, no wonder the restorers of health were ranked among the bestowers of life. The profession ought always to obtain a high rank in the scale of civil subordination. In this instance the moderns act more wisely than the antient Romans, if there is truth in the maxim, that honour is the nurse of arts.

It is however greatly to be regretted, that popular esteem is often misplaced, and rather tends to encourage bold, presumptuous, and unblushing ignorance, than to raise merit from the vale of obscurity. Fashion, it is allowed, has contributed more to the establishment of many celebrated physicians, than any superiority of knowledge that they possessed. This popularity, however, has sometimes been the cause of that merit, of which it ought to have been the effect. It has
given

given men of moderate abilities and attainments, such numerous and extensive opportunities of improving by experience, as could not be obtained by the able, yet unemployed.

Fashion may be allowed to rule with absolute sway in her proper province, in the *mundus muliebris*; but let her not dictate in matters so important as the means of restoring health. Among physicians of integrity and liberal education, let her select whom she pleases; but let her not set aside the votary of science and philosophy, to ask the advice of the needy, the illiterate, the bold empiric.

No. XXXIX. ON THE MEANS OF RENDERING
OLD AGE HONOURABLE AND COMFORTABLE.

IT is a melancholy consideration that man, as he advances in life, degenerates in his nature, and gradually loses those tender feelings, which constitute one of his highest excellencies. The tear of sensibility, said Juvenal, is the most honourable characteristic of humanity.

Whatever real pain may sometimes be occasioned by sensibility, is in general counterbalanced by agreeable sensations, which are not the less sincere and soothing, because they do not excite the joy of thoughtless merriment. The anguish of the sympathetic heart is keen, but no less exalted are its gratifications. Notwithstanding all that has been said on the happiness of a phlegmatic disposition, every one who has formed a true estimate of things will deprecate it as a curse that degrades his nature. It is the negative happiness of the dullest of quadrupeds doomed to the vilest drudgery. Who would wish to be a Bæotian whose lot had fallen in Attica?

Wretched however as is the state, when the heart ceases to feel the quick vibrations of love and pity, we

are all hastening to it by that law of our nature, which obliges us, when arrived at a certain point of perfection, to recede with retrograde rapidity from all that gave us the power of pleasing or receiving pleasure. But if old age were attended only with the deprivation of amiable qualities, the loss of sensibility might often be esteemed a happiness to the individual, as it would prevent him from feeling one of the greatest of natural and undeserved calamities. But the truth is, the absence of all that is lovely is sometimes supplied by all that is odious; as in the season of winter, the verdure and music of the forest are not only no more, but are succeeded by the howling of the blast, and the dreary prospect of nakedness and horror. Old age, though dead to many pleasing sensations, is still most feelingly alive to pain.

Of these evils part is derived from nature and is inevitable, and part from an erroneous conduct, which may be regulated by reason and philosophy.

When the body becomes debilitated by age, languor or pain must necessarily ensue. Bodily infirmities gradually impair the strength of the mind. Uneasy sensations, continued for a long time, sour the native sweetness of the temper. And the peevishness, the moroseness, and the severity which characterize the last stage of life, however disgustful, are to be palliated, and no more deserve to be censured as voluntary faults, than the aching of the joints. They are the natural result of mental pain, and follow from a wounded mind, no less spontaneously or unavoidably, than blood gushes from the incision of an artery. They disturb tranquillity, and poison convivial enjoyment; but they ought to be patiently borne with, if not from motives of humanity, yet from the consideration, that the day is not far distant, when we shall stand in need of the same indulgence. And we may hereafter experimentally know how cutting to the heart are the impatient reproaches of those, who are bound by the ties of conjugal, filial, and domestic duty, to soothe us under the pressure of calamity, and, as the pious poet expresses it, to rock the cradle of declining age.

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But experience proves, that old age is not always attended with natural infirmity. Original strength of constitution, or habitual temperance, often produce a green old age. In this case, the odious qualities usually attributed to that period, are without excuse. Proportionate improvement should be the effect of long observation and experience. The vice of avarice, the characteristic distinction of the last stage of life, is then more than ever unreasonable. It is no less absurd, as it has often been said, than to provide a greater quantity of stores, the nearer the voyage approaches to its conclusion. It is also the source of many other detestable dispositions. It habituates the heart to suffer the sight of woe without commiseration; because pity prompts to relieve, and relief is attended with expence. Hardness of heart, like all its other tendencies, is increased by voluntary indulgence, and he who has long disregarded the happiness or misery of those who were allied to him by the common tie of humanity, will soon become unkind among his nearer connections, cruel to his family and friends, and more cruel to himself.

Another quality, which causes the old man to be avoided by those, who are most capable of affording him amusement, is an unreasonable austerity of manners. A stranger to the feelings of youth, and forgetful that he once was young, he judges even the innocent fallies of lively spirits, and a warm heart, by the severest dictates of rigid prudence. His judgment, however, he finds is little attended to by those, who are addressed on all sides by a more alluring voice. He becomes impatient and querulous. He condemns every thing that is produced in the present times, and extols the fashions, the diversions, the dress, the manners, the learning, the taste, that prevailed in the days of his youth, and which appeared to him superior to those of the present times, solely because his powers of perception were then more lively and acute; the very reason why the present appear with such irresistible charms in the eyes of his grandson.

For the natural evils of old age, relief is to be sought from the physician rather than the moralist. But philosophy can assuage the pain which it cannot cure. It can suggest reflections, which operate like balsam on the wounds

wounds of the mind. It can teach us to bear those evils which it cannot remove, and, by calling forth our powers of resistance, enable us to alleviate the load.

All, however, are not capable of receiving the benefits of philosophy. Few but those, whose understandings have been cultivated, and affections refined by liberal education, are able to understand or profit by the wise precepts of an Epictetus or a Cicero. Of still greater efficacy than the philosophy of these or any other writers, religion steps in to infuse an ingredient into the bitter cup of life, which never fails to sweeten it, and which is adapted to the taste of every human creature.

Religion, indeed, is able of itself most effectually to dissipate the clouds, and to diffuse a sunshine on the evening of life. But to those who are conversant in literature, the celebrated treatise of Cicero may be collaterally recommended as affording solid consolation. Many moral treatises, however just and pleasing they may appear on the perusal, are of little use in the conduct of life, and terminate in speculative amusement. But the Treatise on Old Age prescribes rules, and suggests ideas, which, if permitted to influence practice, must render that period of life truly pleasing and honourable. Every old man, who wishes to be wise and happy, and consequently an object of respect, should turn it over, as Horace advises the student to peruse the Greek volumes, by day and night. Nor can an ignorance of the Latin language be pleaded in excuse for the omission, since the elegant translation of Melmoth has preserved all the meaning of the original, together with a great share of its grace and spirit.

The indigent and the uninstructed cannot enjoy the additional benefit of pagan wisdom; but they have the comfort to know, that evangelical philosophy is fully adequate to the cure of mental disease, and at the same time requires neither extraordinary abilities, nor the opportunities of learned leisure, nor the toil of study. An attendance upon the offices of religion, and on the duties of charity, at the same time that it fills up the vacant hours of superannuated life, with that cheerfulness which ever attends laudable employment, tends to inspire ideas of patience and resignation. A devotional taste or spirit will afford the most lively enjoyments.

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The turbulent pleasures of youth may be succeeded by a religious fervour; by a flame which is capable of warming the cold blood of age, and of affording satisfactions similar in degree to those of more youthful passions, without their danger or criminality.

Thus may the dignity of age be supported. And upon its dignity greatly depends its happiness. It is that alone which can repel the insolence of youth, too often instigated by the levity of thoughtless health, to forget the reverence which among the ancients was thought due to the hoary head. It is really lamentable to observe in many families, the aged parent slighted and neglected, and, like an old-fashioned piece of furniture, or useless lumber, thrown aside with contempt. Such treatment is disgustingly unnatural; but it is not easily to be avoided, where there is no personal merit, no authority derived from superior wisdom to compensate the want of attractive qualities. Tenderness and affection may be patient and assiduous; but who would not rather command the attention of respect, than excite the aid of pity? For the sake, however, of domestic happiness, it should be remembered, that the authoritative air of wisdom must be tempered with a sweetness of manners; and it will be found, that the reverence which does not exclude love, is the most desirable.

To preserve the sensibility of youth at an advanced period is difficult; because reason and philosophy, it is to be feared, can contribute little to its continuance. The loss of it is a natural consequence of decay. Much of the milk of human kindness, as it is often called, flows from a fine contexture of the nerves; a contexture which is broken, and a subtilty which is destroyed by duration.

Excess, however, precipitates the effects of time. Temperance in youth, together with the other advantages of that happy period, will protract its sensibility. And among the many arguments for early wisdom, this must have great weight, that wisdom in youth is usually followed by happiness in age.

Perhaps nothing may contribute more to prolong the amiable dispositions of youth, than the retaining of a taste for its innocent amusements. We often grow old
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in our sentiments, before we are stricken in years. We accustom ourselves to melancholy ideas of gradual decay, and before we are incapacitated for enjoyment, renounce the satisfaction which we might partake. Pleasurable ideas, no less than painful, are caught by sympathy. He who frequents the circles of youth and cheerfulness, will find himself involuntarily inspired with gaiety; he will for a while forget his cares; his wrinkles will be smoothed, and his heart dilated. And though he will not experience the effect of Medea's caldron in the renovation of his body, he will feel his mind, in a great measure, restored to its former vigour and activity.

The books we read in age will have a great influence on the temper, as well as on the conduct and the understanding. After a certain period, many of us, from motives of mistaken propriety, close our books of entertainment, and peruse nothing but those serious treatises, which, though proper at certain times, yet, when perused without variety, induce a settled melancholy, rather than a principled wisdom. Why should the imagination, that fertile source of all that is delightful, be left uncultivated at a time when pleasures become most deficient? Why should the works of a Horace, a Virgil, a Homer, be laid aside for the meditations of a Seneca and Antoninus? The judicious mixture of books addressed to the fancy, with those which enlighten the understanding, would increase the effect of both, at the same time that it would contribute to health and happiness by affording lively pleasure.

Horace wished that he might not spend his old age without his lyre. Music is, indeed, a sweet companion in every stage of life, but to the last it is peculiarly adapted. It furnishes employment without painful exertion, and, while it charms the sense, soothes the heart.

No. XL. ON THE HAPPINESS OF DOMESTIC
LIFE.

AN active life is exposed to many evils, which cannot reach a state of retirement; but it is found, by the uniform experience of mankind, to be, upon the whole, productive of the most happiness. All are desirous of avoiding the listlessness of an unemployed condition. With neither the incentives of ambition, of fame, of interest, nor of emulation, men eagerly rush upon hazardous and painful enterprises. There is a quick succession of ideas, a warm flow of spirits, an animated sensation, consequent on exertion, which amply compensates the fatigue of attention, and the chagrin of disappointment.

One of the most useful effects of action is, that it renders repose agreeable. Perpetual rest is pain of the most intolerable kind. But a judicious interchange of rest and motion, of indolent enjoyment and strenuous efforts, gives a true relish of life; which, when too tranquil, is insipid, and when too much agitated, disgustful.

This sweet repose, which is necessary to restore, by relaxing the tone of the weary mind, has been sought for by the wisest and greatest of men at their own fire-side. Senators and heroes have shut out the acclamations of an applauding world, to enjoy the prattling of their little ones, and to partake the endearments of family conversation. They knew that even their best friends, in the common intercourse of life, were in some degree actuated by interested motives in displaying their affection; that many of their followers applauded them in hopes of reward; and that the giddy multitude, however zealous, were not always judicious in their approbation. But the attentions paid them at their fire-side, the smiles which exhilarated their own table, were the genuine result of undissembled love.

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The nursery has often alleviated the fatigues of the bar and the senate-house. Nothing contributes more to raise the gently-pleasing emotions, than the view of infant innocence, enjoying the raptures of a game at play. All the sentiments of uncontrolled nature display themselves to the view, and furnish matter for agreeable reflection to the mind of the philosophical observer. To partake with children in their little pleasures, is by no means unmanly. It is one of the purest sources of mirth. It has an influence in amending the heart, which necessarily takes a tincture from the company that surrounds us. Innocence as well as guilt is communicated and increased by the contagion of example. And the great author of evangelical philosophy has taught us to emulate the simplicity of the infantine age. He seems indeed himself to have been delighted with young children, and found in them, what he in vain sought among those who judged themselves their superiors, unpolluted purity of heart.

Among the great variety of pictures, which the vivid imagination of Homer has displayed throughout the Iliad, there is not one more pleasing than the family-piece, which represents the parting interview between Hector and Andromache. It deeply interests the heart, while it delights the imagination. The hero ceases to be terrible, that he may become amiable. We admire him while he stands completely armed in the field of battle; but we love him more while he is taking off his helmet, that he may not frighten his little boy with its nodding plumes. We are refreshed with the tender scene of domestic love, while all around breathes rage and discord. We are pleased to see the arm, which is shortly to deal death and destruction among a host of foes, employed in caressing an infant son with the embraces of paternal love. A professed critic would attribute the pleasing effect entirely to contrast; but the heart has declared, previously to the inquiries of criticism, that it is chiefly derived from the satisfaction, which we naturally take in beholding great characters engaged in tender and amiable employments.

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But, after all that is said of the purity and the solidity of domestic pleasures, they unfortunately appear, to a great part of mankind, insipid, unmanly, and capable of satisfying none but the weak, the spiritless, the inexperienced, and the effeminate. The pretenders to wit and modern philosophy are often found to renounce the received opinions of prudential conduct; and, while they affect a superior liberality, to regulate their lives by the most selfish principles. Whatever appears to have little tendency to promote personal pleasure and advantage, they leave to be performed by those simple individuals, who are dull enough, as they say, to pursue the journey of life by the straight road of common sense. It is true, they will allow, that the world must be replenished by a perpetual succession; and it is no less true, that an offspring, once introduced into the world, requires all the care of painful attention. But let the task be reserved for meaner spirits. If the passions can be gratified without the painful consequences of supporting a family, they eagerly seize the indulgence. But the toil of education they leave to those whom they deem fools enough to take a pleasure in it. There will always be a sufficient number, say they, whose folly will lead them, for the sake of a silly passion, called virtuous love, to engage in a life of perpetual anxiety. The fool's paradise, they add with derision, will never be deserted.

Presumptuous as are all such pretenders to newly-invented systems of life and conduct, it is not to be supposed they will think themselves superior to Cicero. Yet Cicero, with all his liberality of mind, felt the tenderness of conjugal and paternal attachment, and acknowledged that, at one time, he received no satisfaction in any company but that of his wife, his little daughter, and, to use his own epithet, his *HONIED* young Cicero. The great Sir Thomas More, whom nobody will suspect of narrowness of mind, who by a very singular treatise evinced, that he was capable of thinking and of chusing for himself, has left it on record, that he devoted a great share of his time, from the united motives of duty and delight, to the amusement of his children.

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It will be objected by those, who pretend to have formed their ideas of life from actual observation, that domestic happiness, however pleasing in description, like many a poetic dream, is but an alluring picture, designed by a good heart, and painted in glowing colours by a lively fancy. The constant company, they urge, even of those we love, occasions an insipidity. Insipidity grows into disgust. Disgust, long continued, sours the temper. Peevishness is the natural consequence. The domestic circle becomes the scene of dispute. Mutual antipathy is ingenious in devising mutual torment. Sullen silence or malignant remarks fill up every hour, till the arrival of a stranger causes a temporary restraint, and excites that good humour which ought to be displayed among those, whom the bonds of affection and blood have already united.

Experience, indeed, proves that these remarks are sometimes verified. But that there is much domestic misery, is no argument that there is no domestic happiness, or that the evil may not be removed.

Natural stupidity, natural ill-temper, acquired ill-habits, want of education, illiberal manners, and a neglect of the common rules of discretion, will render every species of intercourse disagreeable. When those are united by connubial ties, who were separated by natural and inherent diversity, no wonder if that degree of happiness, which can only result from a proper union, is unknown. In the forced alliance, which the poet of *Venusium* mentions, of the serpent with the dove, of the tyger with the lamb, there can be no love. When we expatiate on the happiness of the domestic groupe, we presuppose that all who compose it are originally assimilated by affection, and are still kept in union by discreet friendship. Where this is not the case, the censure must fall on the discordant disposition of the parties, and not on the essential nature of family intercourse.

To form, under the direction of prudence, and by the impulse of virtuous love, an early conjugal attachment, is one of the best securities of virtue, as well as the most probable means of happiness. The duties, which are powerfully called forth by the relations of husband

husband and father, are of that tender kind which inspires goodness and humanity. He who beholds a woman whom he loves, and an helpless infant looking up to him for support, will not easily be induced to indulge in unbecoming extravagance, or devote himself to indolence. He who has a rising family to introduce into a vicious world, will be cautious of setting a bad example, the contagion of which, when it proceeds from parental authority, must be irresistibly malignant. Thus many who, in their individual and unconnected state, would probably have spent a life not only useless to others, but profligate and careless in itself, have become valuable members of the community, and have arrived at a degree of moral improvement, to which they would not otherwise have attained.

The contempt in which domestic pleasures have in modern times been held, is a mark of profligacy. It is also a proof of a prevailing ignorance of real enjoyment. It argues a defect in taste and judgment, as well as in morals. For the general voice of the experienced has in all ages declared, that the truest happiness is to be found at home.

NO. XLI. ON THE ILL EFFECTS OF RIDICULE,
WHEN EMPLOYED AS A TEST OF TRUTH IN
PRIVATE AND COMMON LIFE.

HORACE once happened to say with an air of levity, that ridicule was more efficacious in deciding disputes of importance, than all the severity of argument. Shaftesbury caught the idea, improved upon it, and advanced the doctrine, that ridicule is the test of truth. All those who possessed one characteristic of man, in great perfection, **RISIBILITY**, but who were slenderly furnished with the other, rationality, adopted the opinion with eagerness; for though to reason was difficult, to laugh was easy.

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The admirers of the graces were glad of so pleasing a method of philosophizing, and seized on it without examination. They who admitted it, were under a necessity of smiling; and to smile, if not to laugh, was allowed to be graceful by the great legislator of decorum.

The speculative opinions of studious men, however erroneous, often afford them innocent amusement in their closets, without diffusing any malignant influence on the manners or happiness of others. However interesting to the philosopher may be the disputes concerning liberty and necessity, or the nature of good and evil, they attract not the regard of those who are agitated in the busy walk of life, by the common pursuits of interest and pleasure. The metaphysician thinks his labours of great importance to the happiness of mankind, and would be not a little mortified to find, that in the great numbers who compose the community to which he belongs, and for whose more immediate edification he consumes the midnight oil, a very small part knows that there ever existed such men as Berkley or Hume; and that, if they knew, and could understand their works, they would prefer the opportunity of earning a penny, or enjoying a good dinner, to all the advantage that ever could be derived from a conviction that matter existed not, or that the old principles of morals were erroneous.

But though this may be true of those doctrinal opinions, which are too abstracted for vulgar apprehension, yet it will be found, that there are speculative notions, which, as they require no great improvement of understanding to be comprehended, are adopted as axioms as soon as proposed, and permitted to influence the conduct of life. He who is a convert to materialism, a doctrine of late unhappily recommended by virtuous and well-meaning writers, will certainly lose some restraints which operated favourably on his morals. It is true, the writer who thus gives it all the recommendation his subtlety can supply, though he speaks the dictates of conviction, is perhaps not apparently corrupted. But a reasonable cause may be assigned for his escaping the effect of the poison which
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he bears about him. He is probably a man of letters ; leads a life remote from violent temptations ; has acquired habits of virtue ; and, perhaps, from the practice of reasoning and disputation, can maintain or explode opinions, which concern the most important interests of his fellow-creatures, with all the indifference of a by-stander. But his opinions are plausibly supported ; they are pleasing to the lover of novelty ; they afford a fancied consolation to the vicious, and they are read by those who want a sanction for flagitious conduct, who wish to be furnished with arguments to make proselytes to vice, and who are desirous of silencing the voice of conscience by the fallacies of sophistry. They are read by the young and the gay, as a system of philosophy newly discovered, which far surpasses the antiquated doctrines of the received moralist, and as favourable to those ideas, which they gladly embrace, on the expediency of unlimited indulgence.

That ridicule is an infallible criterion of truth, is an opinion, from its peculiar correspondency to the taste of the greater part of mankind, much more prevalent, and therefore more detrimental in the common intercourse of life.

Men destitute of delicacy, and that solid merit which is usually accompanied with diffidence, often rise to the highest eminence, acquire the largest fortunes, fill the most important offices, and give law to the sentiments as well as practice of others. These, judging from themselves, have no adequate idea of the dignity of human nature, and the comparative perfection of which it is capable. They perhaps have been uniformly vicious, yet have had the temporal reward of virtue ; they have been ignorant, yet have been admired for their wisdom ; they have despised all the precepts of moral philosophy, and by dint of that effrontery which natural want of feeling inspires, have raised themselves to fame and fortune. Bold through the natural presumption of ignorance, and still farther elated by success, by the flattery, by the attentions which are paid to the most undeserving prosperity, they learn to laugh at all the serious part of the world,
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who are defrauding their genius, as it is called, in the rigid servitude of a fanciful virtue.

No wonder then that ridicule prevails in the lower orders; for rank, fortune, and spirit, without the least portion of learning and philosophy, are at any time able to raise a multitude of admirers, and to establish a fashion. When men, with very few other recommendations than the absence of modesty, become the leaders of a nation, a taste for RIDICULE, or, in other words, a malicious desire of levelling the exaltation of indigent virtue to the standard of worthless grandeur, will become general among all ranks. This taste, which tends to vilify all that can adorn and enoble a human creature, has been too common in every long established and corrupted community. He must have remarked but little, who has not seen its baneful influence in our own times and country. All the cardinal virtues, if the efforts of certain gross spirits could prevail, would be laughed out of countenance, and no semblance of them be left amongst us but the unsubstantial and imitating phantom, MODERN HONOUR.

Let us trace the progress of some ingenuous youth, emerging from an uncorrupted seminary to his station in the active world. In the retirements of study, he has formed advantageous ideas of that life, on which he is now to enter. His heart glows with virtuous and benevolent purposes. He has been reading of those legislators, heroes, philosophers, patriots, who shine with lustre in the page of history, and who derived all their splendour from their virtue. He longs to emulate them. He values himself little on his birth or fortune, if he has them, but owns he feels a conscious dignity arising from his acquirements, his learning, his comprehensive views, his liberal and disinterested intentions. He loves fame, and hopes to obtain by deserving it.

Thus principled, suppose him introduced, where his fortune leads him, among some of the ancient nobles of the land; the hereditary or the elected lawgivers of his country, assembled at their usual places of resort, a cockpit, a horse-race, a chocolate-house, or a watering-place. He is struck dumb with astonishment. He
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finds he has hitherto dwelt on fairy ground, where all was enchantment. The fancied scene is vanished. He feels himself awkward. His accomplishments are either not understood, not valued, or have no opportunities of display. At first he is coldly neglected; and, at last, when personal acquaintance has taken place, he is considered as a novice, greatly to be pitied for his simplicity, but who may improve in time. Some kind instructor undertakes the office, and employs RIDICULE, as the most efficacious method of succeeding in it. He finds it necessary to submit to such initiation, before he can be admitted upon equal terms. He yields, though not without a sigh of regret, to think that he must divest himself of all those sentiments, which he once hoped would raise him to the rank of the worthies, whom he admired in books, and cannot help lamenting that he must study degeneracy. Self-abasement is an easy task. He descends from the invidious height of virtue, and is received with pleasure by his relenting companions. In his turn, he learns to despise what he once admired, and contributes, by his advice and example, to strengthen the formidable phalanx of envious deriders. He becomes indeed what is commonly called a wit, that is, a joker, a buffoon, a satirist, a mere man of the world, and perhaps is really so much degraded by contagion, as to judge these characters more valuable than that of the scholar, the good man, and the philosopher. He is no longer the man of virtue, but he is the man of fashion, which he is taught to deem a nobler distinction.

All the useful and amiable qualities, which sweeten private and domestic life, have occasionally been put out of countenance by the prevalence of the doctrine, that ridicule is the test of truth in common life. Conjugal attachment and fidelity, filial regard, regular industry, prudent œconomy, sincerity in friendship, delicate scruples, benevolence and beneficence have been destroyed by the pretender to wit, who, from the malignant feelings of envy, has been prompted to bestow on them some ridiculous appellation.

The effect of ridicule cannot but be powerful among the young and inexperienced. It is a remark often made, that the man is found to degenerate from the excellence which distinguished him when a boy. In the walks of literary life, instances are frequent of those who, though they were the boast of their school, appear with no superiority of merit, when they are advanced to higher seminaries, or introduced into the world. To ridicule, for the most part, they owe their degradation. Their pre-eminence excites the envy of their contemporaries, who naturally endeavour to obscure that lustre, which burns them with its blaze. They at first value themselves on those talents or acquisitions, of the worth of which their companions have no adequate conception. They are received at their college with contempt. Their remarks are attended to with a sneer, and their solemnity, as a decent deportment is called, becomes the subject of perpetual laughter. A nickname, the usual production of envy, is appropriated to them. They are shunned, as involving their companions in their own absurdity and consequent disgrace. This last is more than they can bear. They lay aside the appearance of virtuous emulation, and the reality soon follows. They studiously unlearn all that rendered them truly valuable; and, when they have debased themselves to a certain pitch, they are received with open arms, and are united with their company by the strong assimilation of congenial natures.

Genius, virtue, learning, are often distinguished by a delicacy of mind, which wears the appearance and produces the effects of infirmity. They are easily overruled, if not convinced, by the noisy antagonist, who makes up in clamour what he wants in argument, and gains the victory by dint of leathern lungs and nerves of iron. A horse-laugh, set up by a circle of fox-hunters, would overpower the best poet or philosopher whom the world ever admired. The modest Virgil could not stand the attacks of scoffing ridicule; and wisdom has ever sought the shade, where the impertinence of the great or little vulgar seldom intruded.

Cruel

Cruel as it is to distress sensibility, and injurious to mankind to render worth contemptible, we often observe persons of character joining in the laugh against modesty and merit. In the moment of social enjoyment, we do not give ourselves time to reflect on the consequence of our mirth; and, perhaps, with kind intentions of promoting convivial happiness, we often hurt the feelings and interests of individuals, as well as the most important ends of society.

From the desire of furnishing matter for conversation and supporting its vivacity, some evils arise, which at first view appear to proceed from malignant causes. The tale of scandal, though usually supposed to be the genuine effect of malevolence, is often produced by thoughtless levity, and an unwillingness to sit in company without supplying a share of entertainment. The raillery, which is sometimes played off with success by the shallowest yet boldest of the company, against persons of real merit, is not always the result of a detracting spirit, but of a fondness for coarse mirth, and an inability to let slip those opportunities for indulging it, which genius and learning, from an inattention to trifling accomplishments, are frequently thought to supply.

To be cheerful is indispensably necessary to the mutual participation of the pleasures of social intercourse. To be merry, if it is often desirable, is not always necessary. Let mirth however be uncontrouled, while it is tempered with the wisdom not to hurt those who deserve caresses and reward; and not to sully the dignity, and wound the feelings, of unaffected virtue by the wanton sallies of buffoonery.

Before I leave this subject, I would willingly obviate one error. Great laughs are usually called good-natured. I believe they are often particularly proud and malicious; for there is no method of gratifying pride and malice more effectually than by ridicule.

NO. XLII. ON THE ILL EFFECTS OF PROVING
BY ARGUMENT TRUTHS ALREADY ADMIT-
TED. IN A LETTER.

S I R,

I HAVE reason to think, that I inherited from nature a plain understanding, without any pretensions to the vivacity of genius. I am grateful to my parents, that it was cultivated in that common way which guides through the beaten path of life, and leads not to those eccentricities, which, for the most part, terminate in misery.

I was destined to a mercantile life, and my education was therefore confined to writing, arithmetic, and a little elementary Latin acquired at the grammar-school. With my steadiness of conduct, there was little difficulty in acquiring a competency in the trade in which I was settled by my father. As I had no family, and was free from avarice and ambition, I retired early from the smoke and hurry of the town, to a sweet little house and garden on the borders of Epping-forest.

A state of total inaction both of body and mind, I found less tolerable than the constant bustle of a town life. To my garden I had recourse for exercise. For rural sports I was unqualified, as I had never fired a gun nor mounted a horse. My garden, however, amused me sufficiently, contributed to confirm my health, and, at the same time, induced a contemplative turn. This led me to seek, in books, a supply for the loss of that succession of objects, which had so long solicited and engrossed my attention in the great streets of the capital.

The particular course of reading into which I unfortunately fell, might have proved hurtful, had I not been discreet enough to correct its tendency in time. At best, it only served to fill up those hours, which
might,

might, indeed, have been more agreeably and more usefully employed.

I had received all the notions usually instilled by parental authority, with implicit belief. I was told that there was one God, and I believed it, for I saw his works around me. I embraced revealed religion in all its parts, with the same evidence of conviction with which I believed the sun to exist in the heavens, when I beheld its radiance, and felt its warmth. I saw and believed the difference between right and wrong, vice and virtue, justice and injustice, as strongly as the difference between black and white, and sweet and bitter. I never dreamt of calling in question the authenticity of the scriptural writers, the doctrine of the Trinity, the divinity of our Saviour, the immateriality and immortality of the human soul, and the resurrection of the body. When I repeated the creed, I spoke with the same confidence of undoubting conviction, as when I asserted the truth of a fact, of which I had ocular demonstration. The steady light of common sense, together with parental authority, had hitherto guided me, and I had been humble enough to follow its directions.

It was now at last that I perceived the first shadow of a doubt on these subjects, and it was caused by the following circumstances. In collecting my little library, I often met with books entitled Proofs and Demonstrations of those important points, on which I entertained not a single idea of uncertainty; but I was now naturally led to conclude, that those things were not indisputably evident, of which so many laboured proofs were continually offered to the public notice. My curiosity was raised, and I began to suspect, that it was owing to my simplicity alone that I had hitherto received, without proof, all those doctrines, of which the world seemed to require the most powerful defence, and confirmations infinitely repeated.

The bare appearance of an attempt to prove opinions, which I had ever considered as wanting no other proof than the first strong decisions of common sense, shook the stability of my conviction. Hitherto my days had been tranquil and secure. All my principles in mo-

rality and religion had been planted in infancy, and had taken root deep and strong. My understanding had not been actively ingenious enough to overturn those systems of my forefathers, which had led them through the ways of piety to peace. But I now found my happiness begin to totter, as my principles began to be undermined.

In the books which were every day offered for the conversion of sceptics, for refuting atheists, for proving Christianity, for demonstrating that there is a difference between good and evil, for asserting, that there is some essential superiority in the human nature over the animal, I found no remedy in my unsettled state; but, on the contrary, an increasing tendency to universal scepticism. The ingenious authors of such treatises find it necessary to raise objections, in order to remove them, and to give a degree of weight and solidity to the arguments of their adversaries, that the weight and solidity of their own victorious arguments may be rendered more conspicuous and more honourable.

The books of the objectors I should never have read, nor should I have known any thing of their objections, had I not been ensnared into an acquaintance with the enemies of truth by the ill-judged conduct of her friends. Heresies and errors long forgotten and exploded were revived by these, merely to display their ingenuity in refutation. Sometimes, through the weakness of their judgment, they gave advantage to sophistry; and, by throwing with a feeble hand a pointless dart, encouraged a defeated foe to resume new courage.

Even in the most judicious apologies for those doctrines which I thought wanted no apology, though the arguments were conclusive, I did not perceive that my conviction was strengthened; but, on the contrary, that it was in some degree less clear than before I had received argumentative demonstration. My idea of the truth was at first simple, and proportionably evident; but when that idea was connected with a long chain of arguments, my understanding could not so readily comprehend it with all its additional appendages. There is a degree of abstraction in profound writings, which

which is necessarily attended with a little obscurity. And hence it happens that illustrations, as they are called, of important truths, are sometimes the only circumstances which involve them in darkness.

Whatever complaints have been made against the prevalence of infidelity in this age, and however true it may be of the higher or dissipated orders, it is yet certain, that the Christian religion is implicitly received by the greater part of the community. Though their practice, from the infirmity of human nature, is seldom correspondent with their principles, yet they are far from the character of speculative infidels. It is at least highly probable, that all who frequent the established churches are Christians. It has therefore been matter of just surprise, that a great number of the most ingenious divines should enter the pulpit, as if they were to convert a congregation of heathens or deists. To prove, by a great variety of laboured arguments, the existence of God, is surely unnecessary before an audience, whose convention in a church is a proof that they already believe it. It can have little other effect than to lull them asleep, or to suggest scruples instead of removing them. For it is certain, that not half those arguments in support of scepticism have usually fallen within the notice of the common hearer, which are for the most part adduced in the pulpit, in order to be refuted, by a subtle disputant in divinity. A few good treatises might properly enough be written by the truly able, to shew the sophistry of a deistical author, and then he and his lucubrations might be suffered to pass on to oblivion; whither they would glide with a rapid course, if they were not impeded by the imprudent interference of those, who, if they are sincere and consistent, must wish to accelerate their extinction.

Neither polemical, controversial, doctrinal, nor systematical divinity, seems well calculated to answer the important ends of true religion. The ends of true religion are all friendly and benign. But peace, benevolence, and purity of heart, are, I believe, not at all promoted in those many volumes of theology, which

have owed their origin to controversy, and to logical and metaphysical refinement. They originate in pride, and terminate in acrimony.

One might, indeed, almost venture to pronounce it a judgment on the temerity and the presumption of man, that scarcely any philosopher has distinguished himself by those speculations, which were never designed to fall within the sphere of the human intellect, without starting some notion absurd enough to render his memory ridiculous. Berkley, one of the authors on whom I was so unfortunate as to fall, and whose sense and virtue I venerate, appeared to me an object of ridicule, however ingeniously he had demonstrated to me the non-existence of matter. I happened to meet with him soon after I had been reading an author who had proved, so far at least as that my poor understanding could not refute him, that the human soul was material, and perished at death. Between them both I found I was, on a sudden, deprived of both my soul and body, without any sensible loss or detriment in either. I was tempted to exclaim, Oh, the foolishness of vain philosophy!

Convinced at last that common sense, or that share and species of understanding, which nature has bestowed on the greater part of men, is, when competently improved, the safest guide to certainty and happiness, I have laid aside proofs, demonstrations, and illustrations of all matters sufficiently proved, demonstrated, and illustrated to the humble mind, by their own internal evidence. And however the learned and the disputatious may amuse themselves in morals and religion with fine spun subtilties, I shall rest satisfied with the coarser notions of my forefathers, and make the scriptural rule the rule of my thoughts and actions—To do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with my God.

No. XLIII. ON THE NECESSITY OF TEMPERANCE TO THE HEALTH OF THE MIND.

THE advantages which arise, from regulating the several appetites, to the health of the body, have been too repeatedly insisted upon to require any farther animadversion. The present remarks shall be confined to temperance of diet in particular, and to the advantages which accrue from it to the health of the mind.

How far the intellectual faculties are connected with the animal œconomy, is a disquisition which rather belongs to the natural philosopher than to the moralist. The experience of every individual must convince him of their alliance, so far as that the mind and body sympathize in all the modifications of pleasure or of pain.

One would imagine, that the stoical apathy was founded on a notion of the independence of the mind on the body. According to this philosophy, the mind may remain, as it were, an unconcerned spectator, while the body undergoes the most excruciating torments : but the moderns, however disposed to be stoics, cannot help being a little afflicted by a fit of the gout or stone.

If the mind suffers with the body in the violence of pain, and acuteness of disease, it is usually found to recover its wonted strength when the body is restored to health and vigour.

But there is one kind of sympathy, in which the mind continues to suffer even after the body is relieved. When the listless languor, and the nauseous satiety of recent excess is gradually worn off, the mind still continues for a while to feel a burden, which no efforts can remove ; and to be surrounded with a cloud, which time only can dissipate.

Didactic authors, who have undertaken to prescribe rules for the student in his pursuit of knowledge, fre-

quently insist on a regularity and abstinence in the articles of food and wine. It is, indeed, a fruitless labour to aim at increasing the stock of ideas, and improving the intellectual powers of without a strict observance of the laws of Temperance.

It has been remarked, that the founders of colleges, who spared no expence in the embellishment of the buildings, have not been so liberal in providing food for the inhabitants. Perhaps those no less judicious than pious patrons of learning were sensible of the utility of frequent fasting and temperate meals, in promoting literary, as well as moral and religious improvement. Nature's wants they took care to satisfy, and Nature wants but little.

Horace, in a satire in which he professedly enumerates the advantages of Temperance, observes, with a beautiful energy of expression, "that the body, overcharged with the excess of yesterday, weighs down the mind together with itself, and fixes to the earth that particle of the divine spirit."

That Aurora is a friend to the Muses, is almost proverbial, and, like all those aphorisms which are founded on experience, is a just remark; but, if an adequate cause were to be assigned for this effect, I know not whether it might not justly be attributed as much to fasting, as to the refreshment of sleep. The emptiness of the stomach it is which tends to give to the understanding acuteness, to the imagination vigour, and to the memory retention.

It is well known, that the principal meal of the ancients was the supper; and it has been matter of surprise that they, whose wisdom was so generally conspicuous in the several institutions of common life, should adopt a practice which is now universally esteemed injurious to health. It is however not unreasonable to suppose, that they were unwilling to clog their intellects by satisfying the cravings of hunger in the daytime, the season of business and deliberation, and chose rather to indulge themselves in the hour of natural festivity, when no care remained, but to retire from the banquet to the pillow.

No. XLIV. ON CONCISENESS OF STYLE IN
WRITING AND CONVERSATION.

A Celebrated French writer, remarkable for conciseness of style, in a letter to a friend which he had made rather longer than usual, apologizes for its prolixity, by saying, that he had not time to write a shorter.

To say much in few words is certainly a great excellence, and at the same time a great difficulty in composition. The mind naturally dwells on a strong conception, views it on every side, and expresses its variety of lights in as great a variety of words; but the amplification of a sentence, though it may add to its peripicuity, frequently diminishes its force: as the scattered sun-beams diffuse only a gentle heat, but are able to burn when collected in the focus.

Brevity of expression is sometimes the mark of conscious dignity and virtue. It was manliness of sentiment, and haughtiness of soul, which gave rise to the laconic style. When the tyrant of Macedon menaced the Lacedemonians, the answer they returned was comprised in these few words: "Dionysius is at Corinth." To understand which, it is necessary to call to mind, that Dionysius, tyrant of Sicily, had been dethroned by his people, and compelled to earn his bread by setting up a little school at Corinth. Such a document, expressed in so brief a manner, must have struck the mind with more force than the laboured periods of an Isocrates, or the diffusion of a Cicero.

It is well known, that Sallust was an enemy to the great orator of Rome. One would almost imagine, from the difference of their style, that the disagreement extended to matters of taste and literature. Sallust always labours to express his ideas in the fewest words. Cicero delights in amplification. It has been said, however, that a man of true taste would rather have

written that beautiful parallel between Cato and Cæsar, than all the Philippics.

Many critics have employed their talents in making comparisons between Demosthenes and Tully. All of them agree in attributing to the former conciseness, and to the latter diffusion: and, according to this judgment, they have not hesitated to give the preference to the Athenian. The concise vehemence of Demosthenes carried all before it by violence; the prolixity of Cicero gained ground by the soft arts of insinuation. The effect of the former was sudden and irresistible; that of the latter, comparatively weak and dilatory.

In the *denouement* of a modern tragedy, we find the heroes and heroines expressing their grief in pompous declamation. But, notwithstanding the actor mouths out his complaints in all the grandeur of lengthened periods, and with all the vehemence of studied action, the audience frequently sit unmoved, and are more disposed to smile than to weep. In the *Œdipus Tyrannus* of Sophocles, Jocasta, when she discovers her own and her husband's situation, as deplorable as can well be conceived, immediately retires from the stage, repeating only these words—"Alas! alas! wretched man that thou art—this only can I say to thee—henceforth, for ever silent." Corneille would have put, at least, fifty monotonous lines into her mouth, without half the effect.

Military harangues derive their chief beauty from an expressive brevity. Livy abounds with short speeches, consisting of hardly more than half a dozen words, in which generals animated their soldiers to rush on to danger and death. But ancient history scarcely affords any instance more striking than that of a French king, who thus addressed his men immediately before an attack—"I am your General—you are Frenchmen—there are the enemy."

Conciseness of narration, whether in writing or in speaking, is a mark of truth. To introduce a multitude of proofs and asseverations, is tacitly to confess, that what is said stands in great need of corroboration. One of our English sects, which professes a singular
love

love of truth and plain-dealing, has almost made it a tenet of their religion to use no other words in denying, or asserting, than the single particles of negation and affirmation: and a poet of antiquity remarks, that many promises and professions, instead of strengthening, weaken our belief.

They who have travelled, know that the Frenchman, in the profusion of his politeness, makes many offers which he expects will be refused; and, should you really stand in need of his assistance, it is a doubt whether he will give himself much trouble to alleviate your distress, or disentangle your embarrassment; but an Englishman will do you a piece of service secretly, and be distressed with the expressions of your gratitude. The former will overwhelm you with professions of friendship, without the least real regard; the latter will be surly, and at the same time go all lengths in soothing your sorrows and relieving your wants.

Bluntness is said to be one of the characteristics of the English, and is allowed to be a natural consequence of their sincerity. When it does not degenerate to rusticity, it is not unpleasing.

But the good effects of brevity and conciseness, are not to be found only in writing and conversation. There is something analogous to them in the arts of painting and sculpture. There is a concealment and shading, which sets off more beautifully, and displays more clearly, than an open, an undisguised, a glaring representation. Timanthes took for the subject of a picture, the sacrifice of Iphigenia at Aulis. He gave a degree of grief to the spectators, proportionate to the nearness or distance of their relation to the lovely victim. Thus he had exhausted the passion before he came to the father, and, at a loss to express a sufficient anguish, he represented the disconsolate parent concealing his face in the folds of his garments.

Were the causes of the pleasing and powerful effects of conciseness to be investigated, one of them might perhaps be found to be the pleasure which a reader, or spectator, takes in having something left for his own sagacity to discover. The mind greedily snatches at a hint, and delights to enlarge upon it; but frigid is the employment

employment of attending to those productions, the authors of which have laboured every thing into such perspicuity, that the observer has nothing to do but barely to look on. Things may be too obvious to excite attention. The sun, the moon, and the stars, roll over our heads every day without attracting our notice; but we survey with eager curiosity, a comet, an eclipse, or any other extraordinary phenomenon in nature.

No. XLV. ON THE CHARACTER AND STYLE
OF PLINY THE YOUNGER.

THE character of PLINY the younger, in whatever light it is viewed, is pleasing. The elegance of his writings resulted from the habitual elegance of his mind. Considered as a man of letters, and a man of the world, he may be said, more than any of the ancients, to deserve the epithet of *All-accomplished*.

It has indeed been objected, that his letters are too elaborate. Ease, the characteristic of the epistolary style, is said to be sacrificed to studied ornament: but it should be remembered by the censurers of Pliny, that there are beauties of art, as well as of nature; and that art, even when misplaced, may produce an agreeable work, as nature may bring forth something anomalous, which, though termed a monster by the naturalists, may yet be beautiful. The perusal of Pliny's letters excites a pleasure more similar to that which arises from a view of an elegant parterre, than to that which is derived from contemplating the ruder beauties of uncultivated nature.

Pliny is among those few ancient authors, who have been translated into English without losing much of their original grace. Lord Orrery and Mr. Melmoth seem to have resembled him in their manners, as well as in their style. The task was natural to them, for while they expressed their author's idea, they appear to have expressed their own. Both the translations have uncommon

mon merit; and, if a preference be given to Melmoth's, it must at the same time be acknowledged, that a very great share of praise is due to that of Lord Obery.

The panegyric of Trajan has, like the epistles, been censured, as stiff, laboured, and affected; but if the beauties of the composition can excuse the appearance of labour in the epistles, with much greater reason ought they to justify it in a formal oration. At an advanced period of literature, when taste becomes too capricious and depraved to endure the graces of nature and simplicity, there is no resource left for an author who would acquire popularity, but to labour in the invention of ingenious thoughts, and in bestowing on his productions the nicest polish of art. Panegyric pieces of eloquence are commonly of all others the most difficult, because their subjects are commonly of all others the most barren. What may be said in praise of any man, may usually be comprehended in few words, if naked truth and unembellished facts are represented. Whenever, therefore, it is required, by the ceremonies of a public solemnity, to expatiate on the virtues of particular persons, the orator soon finds himself under a necessity of supplying the deficiency of matter, by ingenious turns and laboured ornaments.

The compositions of Pliny are not likely to please the common or superficial reader. Sounding periods, and animated expressions, are required by the vulgar, rather than the less obvious beauties of correctness and refinement. The passions and the imagination of those, whose intellects and judgment are weak, are often strong and lively. Their mental appetite, like their corporeal, unaccustomed to delicacy, learns to prefer coarse viands to the dainties of luxury. An uncultivated mind perhaps feels, at least, an equal pleasure from the rude ballad of an itinerant singer, with that which arises to an improved taste from the polished pieces of a Horace or an Anacreon. It is, therefore, no derogation from the merits of Pliny, that he is not universally admired. His elegance is too subtle and refined for the vulgar eye.

Though great genius may be displayed in hewing even a rough statue, or in sketching an imperfect picture; yet the judicious connoisseur will always feel a pleasure in examining

examining those works of sculpture or painting, which have received the highest polish, and have been finished with the nicest traits of the pencil. Such writers as Homer and Shakespear I must admire with all their imperfections on their heads; but yet, as imperfections are not of themselves laudable, it is surely consistent with reason to admire those also, who, like Pliny, are even painfully solicitous to avoid them. Longinus, with all the ardour of genius, prefers faulty eminence to faultless mediocrity; but yet neither he, nor any other sensible critic, has pronounced correctness a fault.

It is possible that the judgment may approve, while the heart and imagination remain unaffected. But we read to be moved, to be entertained, to be delighted. Mere approbation is a frigid sentiment. An animated work, therefore, which excites warm emotions, attended with occasional disgust, is read in preference to another, which is insipid, though correct, and dull, though judicious. But where genius is united with correct taste, the judgment, the heart, and the imagination, are at once fully satisfied. Such a combination existed in the minds of Pliny and Addison. It must indeed be remarked, to the honour of Addison, that he is far more natural than Pliny. He has all the elegance of the polite Roman, without the affectation.

“The elegance of Pliny’s manners,” says Melmoth, “adds force to the most interesting, at the same time that it enlivens the most common, subjects. But the polite and spirited turn of his Epistles is, by no means, their principal recommendation: they receive a much higher value, as they exhibit one of the most animable and animating characters in all antiquity. Pliny’s whole life seems to have been employed in the exercise of every generous and social affection.” Who, then, I ask, will not forgive the blemishes of his writings, especially as they are surrounded with so much beauty?

No. XLVI. ON THE EXPEDIENCY OF EMBELLISHING COMPOSITION WITH HARMONIOUS PERIODS, AND WITH OTHER JUDICIOUS ORNAMENTS.

THE laborious antiquary, and the dull compiler, are commonly contented with a book, however undorned and uninteresting, if it affords information. The flowers of rhetoric they despise as meretricious artifices; and the graces of style they neglect as contributing more to embellishment than to solidity.

But the majority of readers are neither able nor desirous to overcome that propensity to be pleased, which they derive from nature. Besides an understanding to conceive, an imagination to invent, and a memory to retain, they have an ear finely susceptible of all the music of modulated periods. Compositions not addressed to the latter as well as to the former of these faculties, they may reject as defective. The finest reasoning, and the most animated oratory, are attended to with disgust, when accompanied with discord. Intrinsic merit may excite approbation, but external ornament is necessary to give pleasure. An accurate system, or a well authenticated history, however rugged the style, is valuable as a collection of materials; but cannot claim the title of a perfect composition, till it is polished to such a degree of smoothness or brilliancy as the species of writing seems to require.

In the rude ages of literature, the mind acquiesces in solid sense expressed in unharmonious diction. An Ennius among the Romans, and a Shakespeare among the moderns, are admired for justness and sublimity of conception, though the style be rough and discordant. The novelty of the first literary productions causes so strong a pleasure in the reader's mind, that he can perceive nothing wanting to complete his satisfaction. His ear is unaccustomed to tuneful measures, and, for want of
better

better examples, feels a pleasure arising from the harshest numbers. Thus the vulgar listen with delight to the rude notes of a ballad-singer; while the refined ear of a connoisseur in music, cannot be soothed but with the soft warbling of an Italian.

But succeeding writers find it necessary, if they hope for readers, to adopt graces unknown to their predecessors. They find it difficult to add novelty to the matter; because, in the course of a few ages, every subject is frequently treated, and consequently soon exhausted. Systematical writings must often, from their very nature, contain nearly the same thoughts, connected in a similar manner. In all kinds of composition, which, either from their particular nature, or from their having been before discussed, admit of no additional invention, if novelty is necessary, it must be in the style, and not in the matter. An author, who cannot add any thing new to the philosophy of a Bacon or a Newton, may yet deliver their thoughts in such a manner, and refine their beauties with such ornaments of diction, that his work may be more read than those of the inventors, from whom it was derived. Fontenelle and Le Pluche have been universally studied; while the sources from which they drew, the works of Bacon and Boyle, are often left a prey to moths and worms in some deserted library.

The books which have united delight with instruction, have always survived those which had no other aim than real utility. Dulness only can pore over the uninteresting page, where nothing is offered to sooth the ear, and flatter the imagination. Such study resembles a journey over gloomy deserts, where no sun-beam cheers the way, no hospitable door invites, no enchanting prospect alleviates the pain of fatigue. Necessity alone can urge the traveller over barren tracks and snow-topped mountains! but he treads with rapture along the fertile vales of those happier climes, where every breeze is perfume, and every scene a picture. Hence in the repositories of literature, we observe, that bulky tomes, replete with the profoundest erudition, are left untouched on dusty shelves; while the more superficial, yet more pleasing productions are perused

perused with delight, and committed to memory by repetition. It is indeed a melancholy reflection, that those immense works of learning, which cost the labour of a life, which were produced by many an aching head and palpitating heart, and by which their authors hoped to acquire immortality, are at last consigned to oblivion, because external beauty is not united with intrinsic value.

Every species of composition has some end in view, which if it does not accomplish, it falls short of due perfection. The end of all historical, rhetorical, and poetical works, is to please as well as to instruct. If either of these does not comprehend every mode of pleasing which is consistent with its kind, it is faulty. Upon this plea, the advocates for rhyme in English verse, rest their argument. Rhyme, say they, judiciously conducted, gives an additional power of pleasing to the natural inherent charms of poetry. It is not to be rejected as a gothic ornament, invented by monkish barbarism, and continued by a bigotted adherence to custom; but is to be adopted and admired as an improvement even on classic versification. In the hands of a Dryden, or a Pope, it soothes the ear with a melody hardly excelled by a Virgil; and though no judicious critic can join Voltaire in censuring Shakespeare for not adopting rhyme (because rhyme is absurd in conversation, whether dramatic or convivial), yet every one must allow, that the poems of Pope would lose much of their beauty should they be deprived of rhyme, even though the subject matter were not to undergo the least variation. We should indeed find, as Horace says on another occasion, the scattered limbs of a dismembered poet, but we should infallibly lose all those graces which result from melody. The bare matter, however just the thoughts and forcible the reasoning, would not give the author the reputation of a great poet. The same remarks may be transferred to prosaic composition. We shall seldom listen, unless the ear is charmed, while the mind is convinced.

One may compare writing to building. It is not enough to bring the stone from the quarry, and form it into a regular pile, in the rude state in which it was produced

produced by nature. It may, indeed, however rough and unshapen, afford a shelter in necessity, and serve all the purposes of common use; but will not strike the eye of a passenger with wonder, till the chisel in the master's hand shall have called forth each latent beauty, added the festoon and the Corinthian foliage, and united grace with strength.

To prove how naturally we are attached to modulated composition, we may remark, that the first works of the most celebrated writers were poetical. The faculty of imagination is the earliest that displays itself in the human mind. The ardour of youth, too wild to be restrained by frigid rules, loves to indulge in all the licence of poetry; but as the reasoning powers ripen, they are enabled to controul the sallies of fancy, which, perhaps, of itself gradually grows chaster and more correct. At this advanced period, the mind descends from the heights of poetry to prose. But it insensibly and unavoidably communicates some of the graces of the art which it has relinquished, to that which it assumes. A vein of poetical ore will be discerned not only in the thought, but in the style; which, though it will not fall into the fault of real metre, will necessarily flow in such cadence as a poetical ear shall dictate and approve.

Unlearned readers seldom attend to the beauties of harmonious composition. If they are pleased with it, they know not whence their pleasure arises. Attentive to the matter rather than the manner, they would, perhaps, think an author but ill employed, who should write a long treatise on the art of turning a period. They would be surpris'd to be informed, that one of the ancient critics has acquired a great reputation by writing on an art which is conversant in sound, rather than in sense, and which is therefore, in their opinion, unimportant. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, however, owes more of his reputation to his Treatise on the Structure of Words, than to any other of his works.

Nor has the art been confined to speculative critics; for Cicero, a practical rhetorician, has attributed an efficacy to the harmony of periods, which experience only can prove to be real. A sentence of no more
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than five words, he informs us, was received with universal plaudits, though, as the author of it confessed, their whole merit consisted in the skilful collocation. Transpose but a single word, and the effect will be entirely lost. In his elegant Dialogues on the Character of an Orator, he has entered into a curious disquisition on the subject of prosaic numbers, and seems to require in an oration, an exactness of metre almost equal to that of verse. The subject is certainly curious, and this great rhetorician, as well as orator, has treated it with precision: but as the quantity of Latin words is ascertained by rules very different from the analogy of modern languages, the strictures of Cicero have no otherwise contributed to harmonize the periods of our writers, than by suggesting the beauty and expediency of prosaic modulation.

But if his precepts have not much influence in giving this finishing grace to compositions in our own language, his example may communicate to them the most captivating melody. His cadences are almost as pleasing to a susceptible ear, as a regular piece of music. So necessary did he deem it to satisfy the sense of hearing, that he often adds a synonymous and unnecessary word to complete the roundness of his period. To accuse an author, of Cicero's fame, of using words merely for the sound, may, perhaps, surprise him who is not conversant in his writings; but the recollection of a few passages will immediately induce those, who are well acquainted with his works, to acknowledge that this observation is founded in justice.

But whoever would trace this harmony to its origin, must be referred to the Greek writers. Their numerous expletives, which occur in every page, are used almost solely to fill up chasms in the cadence, and to render the harmony full and perfect. Some critics have, indeed, attempted to point out the signification of every particle in every passage; but their ill success, after all their diligence, tends to confirm the opinion just now advanced.

The periods of Plato are the models of Cicero. A good ear, on a cursory comparison of a few sentences, cannot

cannot but observe how well the Roman orator has imitated the Greek philosopher.

It may be reasonably conjectured, that one cause why those ancient writers, who have come down to us entire, survived their contemporaries, may be, that they extended their attention beyond copiousness and solidity to pleasing sound and modulated cadence.

Among all our late writers, none appear to me so capable of pleasing an *attic ear* as the late Mr. Harris, of Salisbury. In his *Philological Inquiries* he has treated the subject on which I now speak, with peculiar accuracy and elegance.

NO. XLVII. ON THE PREVAILING TASTE FOR THE OLD ENGLISH POETS.

THE antiquarian spirit, which was once confined to enquiries concerning the manners, the buildings, the records, and the coins of the ages that preceded us, has now extended itself to those poetical compositions which were popular among our forefathers, but which have gradually sunk into oblivion through the decay of language, and the prevalence of a correct and polished taste. Books printed in the black letter are fought for with the same avidity with which the English antiquary peruses a monumental inscription, or treasures up a Saxon piece of money. The popular ballad composed by some illiterate minstrel, and which has been handed down by tradition for several centuries, is rescued from the hands of the vulgar, to obtain a place in the collection of the man of taste. Verses, which, a few years past, were thought worthy the attention of children only, or of the lowest and rudest orders, are now admired for that artless simplicity, which once obtained the name of coarseness and vulgarity.

It must be confessed, that this species of antiquarianism is better calculated for the public in general than any other. An old rusty coin or shield would excite rapture in

in a Swinton or a Rawlinson, but would be beheld with perfect indifference by the greater part of the literati, and by all the unlearned. But the genuine beauties of poetry are capable of being relished by those who are perfectly regardless whether or not it was printed in the black letter, and written by Rowley or by Chatterton. Every lover of poetry is pleased with the judicious selection of Percy, though he gives himself little concern about dates. The antiquary may perhaps admire the oldest and the worst piece in the collection, only because it is old. The common reader, however, does often partake with the antiquarian in the pleasure resulting from labour bestowed in researches after poetry, though he has no adequate idea of the supreme felicity of finding an Otho, or of possessing a worthless old song.

The mere antiquarian taste in poetry, or the admiration of *bad* poetry solely because it is ancient, is certainly absurd. It is more difficult to discover the meaning of many of our old poets disguised as it is in an obsolete and uncouth phraseology, than to read an elegant Greek or Latin author. Such study is, indeed, not unfrequently, like raking in a dunghill for pearls, and gaining the labour only for one's pains.

Our earlier poets, many of whose names and works are deservedly forgotten, seem to have thought that rhyme was poetry. And even this constituent requisite they applied with extreme negligence. It was, however, good enough for its readers; most of whom considered the mere ability of reading as a very high attainment. It has had its day, and the antiquary must not despise us, if we cannot peruse it with patience. He who delights in all such reading as is never read, may derive some pleasure from the singularity of his taste; but he ought still to respect the judgment of mankind, which has consigned to oblivion the works which he admires. While he pores unmolested on Chaucer, Gower, Lydgate, and Occleve, let him not censure our obstinacy in adhering to Homer, Virgil, Milton, and Pope.

In perusing the antiquated pages of our English bards, we sometimes find a passage which has comparative merit, and which shines with the greater lustre, because it is surrounded with deformity. While we consider

consider the rude state of literature, the want of models, the depraved taste of readers, we are struck with the least appearance of beauty. We are flattered with an idea of our own penetration, in discovering excellencies which have escaped the notice of the world. We take up the volume with a previous determination, to prove that it contains valuable matter. We are unwilling that our pains should be unrewarded. We select a few lines from a long work, and by a little critical refinement, prove that they are wonderfully excellent. But the candid are ready to confess, that they have not often discovered in this department a sufficient degree or quantity of absolute merit to repay the labour of a profound research.

Rowe has said, that the old English bards and minstrels soared many a height above their followers; and it is true, that those old ballads, which are in the mouths of peasants on both sides the Tweed, have something in them irresistibly captivating. Vulgar, coarse, inelegant, they yet touch the heart. Many of them, when read, as the writers intended, are musical. They have pleased the ear and the mind of a whole people, and therefore, in spite of the cold feelings of the critic, must be pronounced beautiful. Addison first gained them the notice of scholars, by his praises of Chevy-Chase. He illustrated their beauties, by comparing them with the Classics. This indeed drew the attention of the classical reader; but it may be questioned, whether it would not be a better method to view them as originals; and in order to procure them a general reception, appeal to the genuine feelings of nature. For, in truth, when compared, as compositions, with the correct works of Virgil or Horace, the barbarous language in which they are written, makes them appear to disadvantage. At the same time it must be confessed, that it affords a very pleasing employment to the polite scholar, to remark the coincidences of thought, which are usually found in works of genius, written at different periods by those who could not possibly imitate each other. The philosopher gladly seizes the phenomenon, as it tends to elucidate a curious truth respecting the human mind,

that all men of nearly equal faculties, fall into nearly the same train of thought when placed in similar circumstances.

Notwithstanding the incontrovertible merit of many of our antient relics of poetry, I believe it may be doubted, whether any one of them would be tolerated as the production of a modern poet. As a good imitation of the antient manner, it would find its admirers; but, considered independently as an original, it would be thought a careless, vulgar, inartificial composition. There are few who do not read Dr. Percy's own piece, and those of other late writers, with more pleasure, than the oldest ballad in the collection of that ingenious writer.

Poetical genius appeared with great lustre among the Scots, at a time when it was obscured in England. At one of the barrenest periods of English literature, Dunbar, Douglas, and Lyndsay, wrote with great elegance, as far as the language would admit, and in the true spirit of original poetry. They wanted only a better language, and a more durable dialect, to have become national classics. With all their beauties, it is difficult to read them with patience; for the necessity of continually recurring to a glossary, cools the ardour which the perusal of a beautiful passage may have excited, and induces the tired reader to fly to more modern books, whose gold, equally pure, may be extracted without the trouble of an analytical process.

The present age, it must be owned with regret, is an age of literary deception. It is indeed characteristic of an advanced period of letters and refinement, when the various modes of writing have, in every department, been anticipated, to have recourse to forgery in order to gain attention. Of this every one acquainted with the present state of literature in England is sensible. Chatterton, though the best, is not the only imitator and pretended restorer of our antient poets.

It will be allowed by all, that a composition ought to be estimated by its absolute, not its relative merit. And yet a poem, which, while it is supposed to have been written three or four centuries ago, is generally read and admired, is neglected as soon as it is discovered to be a modern production. This seems to have been the case with the

reputed poems of Rowley. That a work should lose its value in the eyes of the antiquary, when it is found to wear only a counterfeited rust, is not wonderful; but it might reasonably be supposed, that a man of taste would continue to admire it even after the detection. Though at the same time it is true, that most men have so much of the antiquarian spirit, as to feel an additional pleasure when excellence is united with antiquity. By an effort of imagination, we place ourselves in the age of the author, and call up a thousand collateral ideas, which give beauties to his work not naturally inherent.

Whether the antiquarian taste in poetry is reasonable or unreasonable, it affords an elegant and a pleasing amusement to those who possess it. Mistakes in matters of mere taste and literature are harmless in their consequences to society. They have no direct tendency to hurt any interest, or corrupt any morals. While therefore they are not likely to become general, they must not be attacked with virulence. Disputes in the republic of letters; a republic, unlike the political commonwealth, should be conducted with gentleness. That humanity of temper, which a successful pursuit of learning inspires, would, of itself, it might be supposed, secure a mild and generous behaviour in literary controversy. But the reverse has usually been the case. Bentley, Middleton, Warburton, have sometimes indulged an irritable temper beyond those limits, which, as christians and scholars, they must have seen and approved. They who have observed the rancour mutually displayed in the disagreements of the learned, must have concluded, if they knew not the state of the question, that something of the utmost consequence to life, fame, or fortune, was at stake. Contempt or indignation must have taken place, when they found that nothing more was agitated, than the propriety or impropriety of Greek accents, the genuineness of some foolish book, the justness of a conjectural emendation, and other subjects, which had not the least tendency to promote or injure either science or society.

No. XLVIII ON THE MORAL EFFECTS OF
PAINTING AND PRINTS.

EVERY thing which is capable of affecting the mind in a forcible manner may be rendered subservient to the purposes of morality. Music, and indeed all the sister arts, are known to possess a power of exciting sentiments of various kinds; of rousing the mind to manly virtue, or relaxing it to vice and effeminacy. But perhaps none are more instantaneous or subtle in their operation than the productions of the art of painting. Every one who can see, is able to collect the meaning of an obvious picture, and the transition from the eyes to the heart is short and rapid. To receive an impression from a book, it is necessary to read and to reflect; but the idea suggested by a painting is caught at a glance.

A liberal and philosophical statesman, whose comprehensive mind attends to the morals no less than the finances of a nation, will consider the public exhibition of pictures as a matter of national concern. He will use his influence to cause such figures to be represented to the public, as have a natural tendency to call forth manly sentiments, to diffuse a love of decency and order, a spirit of benevolence, honour, honesty, and patriotic virtue. Divines and philosophers, warriors and statesmen, useful writers, and good men of all denominations, represented with all the charms of the pencil, and with all the natural expression of their countenances, cannot fail to animate the bosom with a love of excellence. And it is one peculiar advantage, that this effect may be produced on the rude and the vulgar, on those who have never been improved by education, and who are neither able nor inclined to improve themselves by reading and reflection. The encouragement of the arts is indeed attended with a considerable expence; but while they are made by due direction to improve the minds of the people, they amply repay it. When they are so perverted as to produce unmanly sentiments, or vicious and idle habits,

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they are, at once, the bane of private life and of a free constitution.

The world never yet saw the equal of our countryman Hogarth, in the art of moral painting. The scenes, indeed, which he has exhibited, are taken, for the most part, though not always, from low life; but in this respect the painter shewed his judgment; not only because low life affords a greater abundance and variety of humour, but because low life stands most in need of instruction, and can receive it more easily from a picture than from oral or written documents. I very much doubt, whether the sermons of a Tillotson ever dissuaded so efficaciously from lust, cruelty, and intemperance, as the prints of a Hogarth.

The painters of the Dutch or Flemish school do indeed represent low life; but the representations are rather amusing than instructive. Indeed, I am not sure that they are not injurious to mankind; for while they exhibit men in some of the lowest and most humiliating forms, they tend to encrease his real degradation. It is much to be lamented, that the great skill which they evidently display in the art of painting, was not employed in subjects more susceptible of elevation.

Humourous pictures, or prints are, however, too entertaining to be rejected, while they are restrained within the limits of decency and good-nature. The taste for them is, in this age and country, very prevalent; but I am sorry to say, that the limits which have just been mentioned are too little observed. Among the various methods invented for the gratification of private and party malice, few have been more successful than the caricatura. There is no personage however exalted, nor character however respectable, which may not be lowered in the estimation of the vulgar, by a ludicrous picture exhibited to public view. Some action, passion, feature, attitude, or dress, may be applied to the most deserving man, and may render him an object of ridicule. A most unjust perversion of a noble art; but which, it is to be feared, will continue while the public is led by its taste for detraction to reward the artist by the purchase of his works, however defamatory.

Humourous

Humourous prints have been of late very successfully used to ridicule some of those extravagancies of dress and manners, which arise from effeminacy of manners, and tend to encrease it. The figures represented have raised a very natural and innocent laugh, and the satire, though well pointed and directed, has not usually been personal. Nothing can be more laudable, than to exert this very efficacious art in rendering folly, vanity, and vice, objects of popular derision.

But it must be confessed, that it is much oftener employed in corrupting the heart and imagination by indecent figures. And here I cannot help making a complaint against the police of the metropolis, which allows some of the shops in the most crowded streets to exhibit, in their windows, such prints as cannot fail to inflame the passions of inexperienced youth. Why slumbers the magistrate, or to what purpose are the laws and wise regulations of a civilized state, if we cannot permit our children to walk through the public streets of the capital without danger of corrupting their morals, merely by their looking into a window, which is so furnished as to attract the attention of the most innocent and unsuspecting? A great and successive crowd is usually assembled before the print-shops, which, while it annoys the honest passenger who is hastening to transact important business, is perpetually drinking in a poisonous draught, of which who can tell how malignant and diffusive may be the consequences? Indeed, the print-shops which display to thousands in the course of every day the most inflammatory prints, may justly be stigmatized as the guides to the brothel. In ancient times, and in heathen cities, we read of the utmost precautions taken to preserve the modesty of young men; and ought not the rulers of the greatest city in the Christian world to blush, while they connive at a practice, which tends, perhaps more than any thing else, to debauch the minds of apprentices, clerks, and indeed of all the rising generation? It is certainly a nuisance, and may legally be removed. The interest of some unconscientious individual might perhaps be injured by lessening the sale of his corrupting representations; but what is the interest of an individual, when placed in competition with the morals of the

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multitude?

multitude? If the print-shops in a great city were to exhibit only virtuous prints, they might be highly serviceable to the cause of morality.

The serious part of mankind have complained, that some of the catchpenny periodical publications have of late been embellished, as it is called, with such prints, as tend immediately to corrupt private life, and most essentially to injure society. Neither have they appeared clandestinely, but have boldly solicited notice by a description of their contents in the public advertisements. The serious part of mankind have, I say, complained, and have asked each other, whether the official guardians of religion and decency have been so immersed in politics, or so engaged in pursuit of preferment, as not to have noticed publications which they ought, if they possessed sufficient influence, to have suppressed? They who have sons and daughters cannot but apprehend danger, when the most licentious pictures are daily obtruded on the public eye; and they cannot help thinking, at the same time, that the preservation of the children of the commonwealth deserves at least as much attention from the legislature, as the preservation of hares and puppies.

The art of painting is one of those innocent and delightful means of pleasure, which Providence has kindly afforded to brighten the prospects of human life. Under due restrictions, and with proper direction, it may be rendered something more than an elegant mode of pleasing the eye and the imagination; it may become a very powerful auxiliary of virtue.

It is but just to add, that, soon after this paper was printed, but before it was published, the magistrates of London issued orders for the prosecution of such print-sellers as should exhibit licentious prints in their windows. Attempts have also been lately made to restrain licentious publications; but they have proved abortive; and it has been argued, perhaps with too much reason, that a public endeavour to impede, will serve only to promote, their circulation.

NO. XLIX. ON THE IMPROPRIETY OF PUBLICLY ADOPTING A NEW TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE.

THE translators of our Bible, it is allowed, had great merit; but, as nothing is begun and perfected at the same time, it is not surprising that the translation is not exempt from the characteristic of all human undertakings. Critics, assisted by the labours of the translators, have prosecuted their inquiries into the Hebrew text, and have detected errors in it which they are willing to magnify into importance. Manuscripts having been collated, and the Hebrew text at last ascertained, as far as human ingenuity can ascertain it, there seems, at the completion of the labour, to be a wish among the critics for a new translation.

For my own part, if I may venture to give an opinion contrary to that of the profound collators of Hebrew manuscripts, I cannot help thinking a new translation of the Bible an attempt extremely dangerous, and quite unnecessary. Instead of serving the cause of religion, which is the ostensible motive for the wish, I am convinced that nothing would more immediately tend to shake the faith of many worthy believers.

Time gives a venerable air to all things, to men, to trees, to buildings, and to books. Sacred things acquire peculiar sanctity by long duration. A new church, with all the embellishments of Grecian architecture, is far less venerable than the Gothic tower overgrown with moss. The present translation of the Bible derives an advantage from its antiquity greatly superior to any which could arise from the correction of its inaccuracies. Imagine a Roman senator or warrior, dressed out like a powdered beau of modern times. Much more care is bestowed on him in his present dress. He is nicely and accurately arrayed in every part. But what is the result? He is now pretty, and before he was majestic. Just so, were the Bible cor-

rected and modernized, it would probably become more shewy, and perhaps less inaccurate; but it would lose that air of sanctity, which enables it to make an impression which no accuracy could produce.

We have received the Bible in the very words in which it now stands from our fathers; we have learned many passages of it by heart in our infancy; we find it quoted in sermons from the earliest to the latest times; so that its phrase is become familiar to our ear, and we cease to be startled at apparent difficulties. Let all this be called prejudice; but it is a prejudice which universally prevails in the middle and lower ranks; and we should hardly recognize the Bible, were it to be read in our churches in any other words than those which our fathers have heard before us.

It is true, indeed, that some very devout and well-meaning people carry the prejudice too far, when they profess to believe, that our translation was written with the finger of the Almighty, and that to alter a tittle of it is to be guilty of blasphemy. But still, as the faith of such persons is strong, and their intentions pious, it would be imprudent to shock their minds by an innovation, which they could not help considering as an insult on heaven. If the lessons in the church were to be read in different words from those which they have heard from their infancy, their faith might be more endangered than by all the arguments of the deists. And such persons, though the sarcastic may stigmatize them as weak brethren, are too valuable members, especially in this age, to be wantonly cut off from the body of the church.

But forbearing to urge the air of veneration acquired by time, or the attachments formed by prejudice to the Bible, I cannot help thinking, that the present translation ought to be retained in our churches for its intrinsic beauty and excellence. We have had one specimen of a new translation of the Bible by a very learned and ingenious bishop. It is exact and curious; but I will venture to say it approaches not to the majesty, sublimity, and fire of the old translation. A reader, after going through it, will not upon the whole receive so deep and lasting an impression from it, as
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from the old one with all its imperfections. And it is from the general effect of a work that its excellence must be estimated.

The poetical passages of scripture are peculiarly pleasing in the present translation. The language, though it is simple and natural, is rich and expressive. Solomon's Song, difficult as it is to be interpreted, may be read with delight, even if we attend to little else but the brilliancy of the diction; and it is a circumstance which increases its grace, that it appears to be quite unstudied. The Psalms, as well as the whole Bible, are literally translated, and yet that translation abounds with passages exquisitely beautiful and irresistibly transporting. Even where the sense is not very clear, nor the connection of ideas obvious at first sight, the mind is soothed, and the ear ravished, with the powerful yet unaffected charms of the style. It is not indeed necessary to enlarge on the excellencies of the translation in general; for its beauties are such as are to be recognized by feeling more than by description, and it must be owned, that they have been powerfully felt by the majority of the nation ever since the first edition. In many a cottage and farm-house, where the Bible and Prayer-Book constitute the library, the sweet songs of Israel, and the entertaining histories of Joseph and his brethren, Saul and Jonathan, constitute a never-failing source of heart-felt pleasure.

It is false refinement, vain philosophy, and an immoderate love of dissipation, which causes so little attention to be paid to this venerable book in the busy and gay world. If we do not disclaim all belief in its contents, it is surely a great omission in many gentlemen and ladies who wish to be completely accomplished, or think themselves so already, to be utterly unacquainted with the sacred volume. It is our duty to inspect it, and it is graciously so ordered, that our duty in this instance may be a pleasure; for the Bible is truly pleasing, considered only as a collection of very ancient and curious history and poetry.

With respect to the impropriety of appointing a new translation to be read in churches, what I have advanced on the subject is only matter of opinion, and may per-

haps be found in the event erroneous. I shall, however, very confidently say, that innovations of this kind are of the highest importance, and may probably be attended with the most violent concussions. They ought therefore to be attempted only when there is an absolute necessity for them, and after the maturest deliberation.

NO. L. ON THE MULTIPLICATION OF BOOKS.

NO amusements are more easily attainable, and attended with more solid satisfaction and fewer inconveniencies, than the literary. In these late ages, there is scarcely a subject, which can reasonably excite human curiosity, on which satisfactory information may not be acquired by the perusal of books, which, from their multitude, are obvious to all who are disposed to give them their attention. Poetry, history, eloquence, and philosophy, in all its ramifications, are constantly at hand, and ready to gratify the mental appetite with every elegant variety of intellectual sustenance. The imagination can at all times call up, by the medium of books, the most vivid representations of every object, which the physical and moral world have been known to produce. Exempt from the inconveniencies of foreign travel, from the dangers of a military life, from the narrow escapes of the voyager, and from the tumult of political engagements, the student can enjoy, in the comfortable retreat of his library, all that has employed the active faculties of man in every department of life.

As a source of a very lively, as well as a pure pleasure, reading is become the constant amusement of that considerable part of the community, whom the circumstances of profession, sex, or inclination, have confined to a sedentary life. The age is said to be dissipated, and the most superficial observation will justify the complaint. Yet it must, on the other hand, be acknowledged, that it is most extensively enlightened.

Books,

Books, that possess originality and real merit, are still encouraged. Circulating libraries, furnished with valuable as well as trifling works, and societies established for the purchase of new publications, abound throughout the kingdom. The stream of national knowledge is certainly diffuse; nor is there sufficient reason to assert, what some have maintained, that it is become shallow by diffusion. If the productions of those who have gone before are richer and more solid, it reflects not disgrace on their followers, whose discoveries are anticipated by the first investigators. He who first opens the mine, will return laden with treasure at an easy rate. He who succeeds may, with more sagacity and labour, acquire less; nor should it detract from his praise, that he brings forth little where little remained.

In this advanced stage of literature, much of the student's life is necessarily employed in retracing the progress of those who have preceded him. He heaps up knowledge, and has often little time, even if he has inclination and ability, to communicate it in a correct and graceful manner. There is little doubt, but that many of the literati, who have never written, are at least equal in the extent of their knowledge to the writers whom they study and admire. They have never written, perhaps, from indolence, and perhaps from a want of a power to utter, with agreeable facility, what they apprehend with clearness. These must be supplied with a constant succession of books; and it is found by experience, that few books please more cordially, or at least excite attention more forcibly, than those of contemporary authors. It appears then, that, for the sake of the learned as well as the common reader, the multiplication of books, though it has sometimes been lamented, ought, upon the whole, to be encouraged. No one is compelled to read what he does not approve. A sumptuous entertainment is prepared, nor should the guest find fault with the number or variety of the dishes. They are all laid before him with design to give him pleasure, and it is easy to select that which is capable of affording it, and to refuse all that is insipid or disgusting.

Modern authors are naturally disposed to justify to themselves and others the addition which they make to the number of books. They are unwilling to suppose, that every subject is anticipated; that all the avenues to fame are closed; that the knowledge acquired by study, and adorned by the expression of genius, is incapable of obtaining its proper reward, the praise of every ingenuous and congenial mind. Literary productions continue, therefore, to multiply, and every writer finds some plausible apology for presenting to the public an additional volume.

NO. LI. LETTERS THE SOURCE OF SOLID
CONSOLATION.

THE sacred writers, the heathen philosophers, all who have either thought or written with solidity, have agreed that man is born to trouble, and that few and evil are his days. The moral poet Euripides has said, that to be a Man is a sufficient plea for being miserable; and who, indeed, has not felt this truth?

Yet it is at the same time true, that the kind hand of Providence has scattered flowers as well as thorns in the road of life; and the great skill required, is to select those that are perennial, those that do not bud, blow, and wither in a day; from those that shine with transient lustre, or conceal poisonous qualities under a vivid foliage.

Among the many arguments for a classical and comprehensive education, there are few which ought to have a greater weight, than that it enables those who enjoy the benefit of it, to derive the purest, the sweetest, the most elegant, and the least injurious pleasures from themselves and from reflection. The man of taste and learning creates, as it were, a little world of his own, in which he exercises his faculties; and he feels his most exalted satisfactions arising from things, the existence of which is scarcely known to the vulgar mind.

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The parent in the middle ranks of life, who is able to place his son above dependence, contributes more to his real happiness, when he gives him a taste for the classics, and for studies which will exalt his nature, than when, by making him a trader without a gentleman's education, he affords him an opportunity of hereafter shining in the mean magnificence of wealth, unaccompanied with elegance and liberality. To possess thousands with the narrow spirit of a mere stock-jobber, can add but little real happiness. But to possess a just taste for a Virgil, and for the other fine writers whom the world has long admired; to be capable of feeling their beauties, with only the common comforts and conveniences of life, will confer an elegance and dignity of mind; and will cause a finer pleasure than was ever known to a Crassus or a Clive.

Where, indeed, shall we find objects capable of attaching the mind in every stage of life, in every condition, in every time, in every place, but in the walks of literature? These studies, says Cicero, in a passage which can never be too often repeated, afford nourishment to our youth, delight our old age, adorn prosperity, supply a refuge in adversity, are a constant source of pleasure at home, are no impediment while abroad, attend us in the night-season, and accompany us in our travels and retirements. The great statesman spoke the dictates of his own experience. To his hours of dejection and privacy, we owe many of his finest philosophical treatises, in the composition of which he a while forgot his own and his country's calamity.

Deep sorrow is known to seek solitude for indulgence. Company may dissipate the lighter cares, but it appears like mockery to real woe. Add to this, that to mix with company while under the influence of grief, unless it is the company of familiar friends, is a violation of the rules of propriety, since it tends to throw a damp on that cheerfulness, to promote which is one of the ends of society. But solitude invites to reading; and amid the great variety of books, some one may always be found in unison with our own temper. In the retirements of our library, no insolent intruder can upbraid

upbraid us for disinclination or incapacity to taste convivial enjoyment. There we may find balsam for every wound of the mind, and a lenient medicine for every disease.

When the prospects which present themselves in the common road of life are dark and dreary, the man of taste can step aside into the elysium of poesy, and tread the flowery paths, and view the gilded scenes which fancy raises with the magic of enchantment. The ingenious biographer of the poet Gray has informed us, that the most approved productions of his friend were brought forth soon after the death of one whom the poet loved. Sorrow led him to seek for solace of the muse. That the muse smiled on her votary, every reader of taste has already acknowledged. Sacred history has acquainted us with the power of music over the passions, and there is little doubt but the verse as well as the lyre of David, can sooth the troubled spirits to repose.

It is difficult to be attached to the common objects of human pursuit, without feeling the sordid or the troublesome passions. But in the pursuits of learning, all is liberal, noble, generous. They require and promote that comprehensive mode of thinking, which overlooks the little and mean occupations of the vulgar mind. To the man of philosophical observation, the world appears as a theatre, in which the busy actors toil and weary themselves for his amusement. He sees the emptiness of many objects which are ardently pursued; he is acquainted with the false glitter that surrounds him; he knows how short and unsubstantial are the good and evil that excite all the ardour of pursuit and abhorrence; and can therefore derive a degree of delight from reflection, of which they who are deeply, and even successfully interested in them, can never participate. Notwithstanding the charms of opulence, Socrates and Epictetus have attracted more admirers, and probably enjoyed more tranquillity of mind, than the richest publican of Athens and Rome.

It is true, that learning should be pursued as a qualification for the several professions of civil life; but excluding the motives of interest and ambition, it is

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to be cultivated for its own sake, by those who understand and wish to enjoy, under every circumstance, the utmost attainable happiness. Next to religion, it is the best and sweetest source of comfort in those hours of dejection, which every mortal must sometimes experience. It constitutes one of the most solid pillars to support the tottering fabric of human felicity, and commonly contributes as much to virtue as to happiness.

No. LII. ON THE EXCELLENCE OF LORD
BACON AS A MORALIST.

NO acts are so truly our own as those of the understanding. The world has long agreed in admiration of Alexander, Cæsar, and Charles of Sweden; and the remark of Cicero seems not to have occurred to them, that the glory of a general is in great measure derived from the merit of those who obey him, and that a thousand contingencies must conspire, to give efficacy to the best concerted plans of military operation.

But the works of genius are commonly produced in solitude. The mind forms its own design, and pursues within itself all the methods that conduce to its accomplishment. Fortune has little influence in retarding or promoting its purposes. If, then, the proportion of glory, which ought to redound to an individual, is to be estimated by personal merit, independently of external aid and accidental events, the triumphs of ingenuity must be held more honourable than the triumphs of valour, and a conquest of the intellectual world more worthy the dignified page of history, than the subjection of the terraqueous globe. Such a conqueror is the great Bacon; and when the world shall have corrected its erroneous judgment, he will be placed in a rank superior to the son of Philip.

A popular historian of England has, however, depreciated the merit of this glory of our nation. Hume
has

has plainly pronounced him inferior to the Florentine philosopher Galilæo; and he attributes the great applause that has been paid to him, to the illiberal partiality of our national spirit. Something more reasonable than the suggestions of this spirit will prompt many to attribute his detraction to national envy.

The testimony of foreigners, who cannot be biased by this prejudice, is truly honourable to our great philosopher. Baco Verulamius, for so they call him, is more frequently mentioned, and with higher applause, than the ingenious philosopher of Italy. Great as have been the praises bestowed on Bacon in his own country, they have never reached the high encomiums of foreign universities.

It was the great mistake of Aristotle to have accommodated his physics to his logic, instead of rendering his logic subservient to his physics; and, as the critics have observed, by inverting the natural order of things, to have subjected the end to the means. To remove this error, our philosopher invented his *novum organum*, in which he teaches to reason by induction; a more effectual method of eliciting truth, than the antiquated and trifling forms of a perfect syllogism. This work is acknowledged to be his master-piece; and its beneficial effect in ascertaining science, by reducing it to the test of experiment, is alone sufficient to entitle him to all the fame he enjoys.

But his predominant excellence in promoting the science of nature, seems almost to have absorbed his glory as a moralist. His genius, however, formed to penetrate into all subjects on which it directed its beams, made those discoveries in common life and common manners, which, it might be supposed, would be less likely to occur to the deep and recluse speculator than to the man of business. In all his moral writings there is a solidity of remark, which enables the reader to select something useful on every perusal. It is this original and substantial excellence, which gives a grace to his writings, not to be deformed by a style by no means uniformly elegant; though Sir Richard Baker, whose taste, however, was not equal to his knowledge, asserts of it, that Bacon has written

in so sweet a style, that, like manna, it pleases every palate.

Men of profound science commonly excel more in judgment than in wit. But Bacon is acknowledged to have displayed a very considerable degree of wit in his moral lucubrations. Rapin says, there is more of it in his ethics, than in any of his writings; for which, I think, a reason may easily be assigned. Observations on men and manners admit a playful ingenuity of thought; but the features of severe science are not often to be relaxed by the sallies of a sportive fancy.

I have often regretted, that so sagacious an understanding was not more frequently employed in speculations more generally useful, than those sublime subjects of science which are unconnected with practice. Had he employed that subtilty of observation, in remarking and describing manners, which is conspicuous in some useless conjectures in natural philosophy, there is little doubt but the world would have received great light, where light is most wanted, in the art of regulating our passions, and the conduct of life. The little he has left us is an invaluable treasure; and the works I should most wish to recover, if all his productions were lost, is the Moral Essays.

The Advancement of Learning, though much less read than the superficial works of later times, is one of the most entertaining and improving books in the language. The remarks in it strike the mind with such an evidence of conviction, that the truth discovered pleases like that derived from mathematical demonstration. The thoughts of Bacon have this peculiar excellence, that they not only please and convince by their justness, but lead the mind to think still farther on the subject, and assist it in its efforts. Not like the trifling writer, who is forced to make the most advantage of a good idea by dilating it, as the gold-beater extends a little gold; Bacon leaves the reader to comment on a solid reflection, when he has once given it utterance in a clear and concise expression.

His reputation as an historian, though great during his life, seems gradually to have declined, and is now nearly lost. His Reign of Henry the Seventh is only
read

read by those whose veneration for him induces them to acquaint themselves with all his works.

Whatever defects the prevalence of a bad taste may have occasioned in some of his productions, we may compare them all together to a venerable pile of Gothic architecture, which, though it has not to boast the grace of Grecian elegance, or the finery of the Chinese style, possesses a solidity and substance, which will cause it to endure when not one stone shall be left upon another in the edifices of a more refined or ostentatious taste.

When we compare this great man's writings with some of the weaknesses of his life, we are tempted to exclaim with a modern delineator of characters, Alas, poor human nature !

NO. LIII. ON THE CHOICE OF A PROFESSION.

MUCH has been said on the necessity of discovering the genius at a puerile age, and of consulting nature in the choice of a profession. Yet, after all, chance usually determines the boy's destination.

It is, indeed, by no means easy to find in the child the distinguishing excellence of the future man. The mind, in the course of a few years, appears to undergo a total renovation. Different faculties, like different trees, put forth the blossoms which presage the fruit, at earlier or later periods, according to some interior arrangement, which eludes research. They who have taken the most pains to learn the natural propensity of the young mind, and have been led by some striking appearance to chuse a future employment for it, have found their pupils no more skilful or successful, than those who were directed to the same plan merely by fortuitous circumstances. Few parents, and few superintendants of education, are capable of forming this judgment; a judgment that must proceed from an intimate knowledge of the human heart, and a long
experience

experience of the changes produced in it by time and accidents.

But it is less difficult to discover the advantages and disadvantages of the various employments of life, than to point out those who are formed by nature to fill them with honour.

The clerical profession seems to be well adapted to promote the happiness of him who can command his passions, and who is of a contented disposition. Such a one is a Christian philosopher, and possesses the agreeable privilege of instructing his fellow-creatures in moral, philosophical, and religious truths. He is at liberty to pursue one of the pleasantest and the most tranquil paths of life, that which leads through the quiet, yet diversified regions of learning. He is usually respected much more than those whose birth and fortunes have placed them in a higher sphere. He is more a master of his time, that invaluable possession, than the rest of the busy world, because his engagements are at an appointed season. But if to accumulate money, either from the necessity of providing for a family, or from avarice, be his object, he will find himself miserable, because he is placed in a situation, where his desire cannot often be gratified with ease and honour. The stipends of the most useful part of the clergy, those who officiate, are often not greater than the earnings of a hireling mechanic. Yet an appearance of a competency must be supported by the curate, not from pride alone, but from a laudable design of accomplishing the purposes of his profession. In vain will he preach, in vain will he set a good example, if a mean appearance and mode of living contradict the received opinions of congruity, and produce contempt. There are indeed rich preferments; but these, it is observed, do not usually fall to merit as the reward of it, but are lavished where interest and family connection put in their irresistible claim. They seem, in this age, to be considered as supplemental provisions for the younger brothers of opulent and noble families. He, therefore, who has neither interest nor connections, must learn, when he enters on this profession, to view the
goods

goods of this world in the light in which they have been considered by the wisest and the best of mortals.

More families have been raised to civil eminence by the study of the law, than by any other pursuit. Riches and honours have been profusely accumulated on its successful professors. The multiplication of statutes, and the variety of forms in modern times, have indeed rendered the study uncommonly intricate and laborious, and it seems therefore to merit uncommon rewards. But distinguished success is necessarily confined to few, and many have worn out a good constitution in perusing books of all others the least amusing, without any return of honour or of profit. In this age the profession is overrun by the multitude of nominal, if not real students. Formerly the heir to a good estate was brought up to little else than fox-hunting, and to be in at the death, and to water the *quorum* ten miles round, were the objects of his highest ambition; but now he is usually entered at an inn of court, advised to read Blackstone, and called to the bar. And though he should never succeed there, yet it is certainly better to let a young man have a profession to employ his thoughts, than to suffer him to live in idleness and vice. When, after a life of useful labour, the advocate is rewarded with a judge's appointment, his labour does not cease. Ease, his proper recompence, remains still at a distance. Perhaps, during the time of business, there are few employments more irksome and unhealthy. The truly valuable rewards are indeed seldom obtained in the law, till age and application have weakened the powers of perception; and when these are decayed, what are external advantages? Upon the whole, we may conclude, that though the profession of the law, when attended with success, is lucrative, and well adapted to raise and establish a family, it is seldom consistent with personal tranquillity.

The preparation for the practice of physic is by no means agreeable. A philosopher may indeed attend a dissection with pleasure, as affording an opportunity for the observation of nature; but it must always be disgusting to view the loathsome objects of an infirmary.

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Yet this discipline is necessary; for books alone are of little use. After all the expence and labour of education, it is mortifying to the sensibility of merit to observe those chiefly encouraged, who have little else to recommend them than confidence and external grace of behaviour. He whose solid knowledge induces him to speak with diffidence on the success of a prescription, is thought by the generality less able than the bold pretender. With all this physiological science, if he has not the address to conciliate the whims of fashion on his side, his sense of feeling will seldom be soothed by the grateful application of a fee. Men of sense may respect him, but he must be enriched by old women and fools. When, however, he is sufficiently employed, it must be an additional pleasure to the natural satisfaction of success, to find his own emolument arising from giving ease to the distressed. Yet it is by no means adviseable, that any should be trained to this profession, who do not possess such a degree of independence, as may enable them to be easy under the neglect of a capricious world.

The army affords a fine asylum for those spirits, which are too restless for domestic life. But though it has many charms for a warm imagination, it seems little adapted to give solid comfort at any time, much less in the season of infirmity and in old age. It is happy for the commonwealth, as things are now constituted, that the acknowledged gentility of the profession obliterates the sense of its hardships.

Still less suited to afford tranquil pleasure, the navy is yet always supplied even by those who have ease and affluence at home. To be confined with a crowd for many months in a wooden machine, is a situation which nothing but use and example could render tolerable. This lot, however, must fall to some; and it does not appear, that they to whom it has fallen are less happy than the rest of mankind. Providence wisely and kindly fits the disposition to external circumstances.

The employment of merchandize is commonly esteemed less liberal than any of these; and it is true, that the preparation for it, and the arts of keeping and improving money, have a tendency to contract the sentiments.

timents. The professions have some connexion with public spirit, with science and philanthropy. The trader's views seem to center in private emolument; and though he is highly beneficial to the community, it seems not from intention; on the contrary, he appears ever ready to take advantage of it without injury to his character, and consequently to his interest. Yet it must be confessed, that, in our commercial country, and in the present age, the mercantile orders have frequently shewn themselves truly honourable and enlightened; and he would act imprudently and ridiculously, who should slight a good opportunity of introducing his son to a successful merchandise, merely because it has not been held so liberal as the profession of him who starves with a doctor's degree.

All the occupations of life are found to have their advantages and disadvantages admirably adapted to preserve the just equilibrium of happiness. This we may confidently assert, that, whatever are the inconveniences of any of them, they are all preferable to a life of inaction; to that wretched listlessness, which is constrained to pursue pleasure as a business, and by rendering it the object of severe and unvaried attention, destroys its very essence.

NO. LIV. ON AFFECTATION OF THE CHARACTER OF SPORTSMEN.

ANIMALS that are hurtful to man, and are therefore destroyed by him, seem to have an instinctive knowledge of their enemy, and avoid his approach before they can have experienced his power or his contrivance. Man likewise possesses a counteracting instinct, which leads him to the recesses of the forest, and bears him with alacrity through all the dangers and fatigues of a chase.

This instinct was necessary to his subsistence, as well as defence, in the savage state; for the prey that he caught was his only food. Implanted in his constitution,

tution, it continues to operate with great force, even when he is advanced to a condition in which his wants are supplied by the inventions of civilised life.

In our country, where every improvement of life is carried to an exalted height, the instinct of the hunter is certainly not destroyed by the new propensities which are superinduced in a state of civilization. There is scarcely an individual of those who are not refined to a very uncommon degree, who delights not in the sports of the field. The rich must not flatter themselves with an idea that their taste is peculiar to themselves; for there is really no taste more vulgar, and more prevalent among the lowest orders, than the taste for destroying noxious animals, protected by the legislature for the amusement of the wealthy. The mechanic leaves, without remorse, the employment which is to support himself and his family, to follow the Esquire in the chase of a fox, and would rather shoot a pheasant or ensnare a trout, than earn a guinea. The glee with which he recounts the adventures of the pursuit, proves it to be a pleasure congenial to his heart.

A wise politician, who did not wish to monopolise the delights of the chase, would encourage this natural propensity among the vagabond and the unemployed. For besides its utility in the destruction of vermin, it tends to infuse a spirit, a hardiness, and a subtilty, well suited to qualify such persons for the dangers and the hardships, the contrivances and the stratagems, of a naval and military life. A man who is excluded from more liberal employments by the lowness of his station, may render himself a useful member of society by catching moles and hares, rats and foxes.

But it is really no less ridiculous than lamentable, that the heir to an estate, the man of education, should forego the honours and pleasures of social, civil, and literary exertions, merely to enjoy the delight of joining a pack of hounds in the destruction of a helpless animal. Yet the truth is, this instinct, as I venture to call it, operates with great violence among those whose opportunities for improvement might enable them to subdue every less laudable relic of savage humanity.

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The nobles of our land, whose example might have a salutary influence in disseminating every useful quality, are sometimes destitute of all ideas of excellence beyond the sphere of a stable. They indeed indulge their propensities of this kind without controul. The laws are on their side, and the poor man is prevented from destroying the vermin that fattens on his substance. The game-laws are, however, confessed by those who enact them, to be a disgrace to an enlightened age. At the same time that they infringe on liberty, they argue a very considerable degree of barbarism.

The love of rural sports, with all their appendages of horses, dogs, and jockies, is at present carried so far, that the gentleman by birth labours to lower himself to the rank of a huntsman, and even dresses himself in the garb of an ostler. It would not, in the present day, be surprising to meet a privy-counsellor or a judge in the exterior of a whipper-in.

And why should they be censured? says the pretender to superior reason. Is a man less honest or less learned, according to any difference in his dress? It is certain that, if the world were filled with philosophers, it would be a circumstance of little moment. But every thing that lowers the great in the eyes of the vulgar, injures society by disturbing the settled climax of subordination. The vulgar are awed into submission by no methods so effectually, as by a respectable outside. Were a clergyman, for instance, to ascend the pulpit in the dress of a jockey, such a dress as some are seen to wear on the week-days, he might speak with the tongue of an angel, and yet be disregarded. His appearance, even on other occasions, in the livery of a sportsman, though it may make him pass for a knowing one, and recommend him to his patron, will degrade him among his parishioners, and render his order contemptible.

The influence of dress on manners is considerable, though not much attended to by the moralist. Horace indeed relates, that when Eutrapelus wished to do any one an injury, he gave him fine clothes. The cause of an effect thus produced in the disposition by the external

ternal habit, is, that the mind insensibly adopts something of the character it personates. There is a natural love of congruity, which insensibly causes the behaviour to correspond with the dress. He who assumes all the externals of low life, will soon exhibit proofs of internal abasement. If the peer condescends to spend his days in a stable, and to dress like his groom, he will soon differ from him in those circumstances alone which render his degeneracy more conspicuous and detestable. It will not be thought calumny to assert, that our own times have exhibited some melancholy examples of this disgraceful humiliation.

A taste for the pleasures of the race is indeed justified by the example of a most refined people. But the Greeks, it is imagined, did not adopt it as affording an opportunity for gaming. In our age and nation, it is warmly patronized by the illustrious and noble, not from liberal but mean views; and it is frequented by those infernal wretches, whose profession it is to take advantage of their superiors folly. And these, by a strange event, are admitted to familiarity with the great, whose wealth they pillage, and whose principles they corrupt. The stand, or gallery at a horse-race, has been very justly likened to a Pandæmonium.

Rural sports, also, when not pursued with an attention greater than their importance will admit, nor as the business of life, afford a healthy and a manly relaxation. But when all the circumstances which relate to them are considered with a seriousness, and pursued with an ardour, which momentous business only can justify, the moralist cannot help lamenting that so much industry is misplaced. When they lead the rich and liberal into company and occupations which degrade their dignity, he cannot but express an indignant sentiment. He sees with regret, at a time when national virtue is particularly required, some of those who have most influence in a nation, totally engaged with dogs, horses, and grooms.

To value a noble animal for its use, to admire it for its beauty and swiftness, to love it for its generous alacrity in the service of man, is natural and reasonable.

It is indeed the mark of an amiable disposition, to observe and to be pleased with the manners and actions of the poor animals whom nature has subjected to our command. If fidelity and generosity are lovely qualities, the dog and the horse have a peculiar claim to a share of affection. But they who circumscribe their ideas within the verge of a stable, who prefer the company of their irrational animals to the society of a fellow-creature, seem to be in danger of gradually assimilating with the nature of their beasts, and of acquiring a degree of brutal ferocity.

No. LV. ON THE VANITY AND FOLLY OF
DEPARTING FROM OUR PROPER SPHERE TO
BECOME AUTHORS AND ORATORS, WITH-
OUT PREVIOUS AND SUFFICIENT PREPA-
RATION.

IT has been observed, that the writer who declaims against vanity, is probably, at the same time, under its influence. There are however some species of vanity, which, in comparison with others, are not only excusable, but almost laudable. The vanity of wishing to appear in print, when the person who entertains it has been well educated, and is free from the necessity of attention to any particular business for his support, frequently operates as a stimulus to industry, and industry seldom fails of becoming, in some mode or other, beneficial. If he, who is really a student by profession, feels an ambition to become an author, though he should fail through the defect of his abilities, yet he cannot be said to have acted out of character; neither does it often happen, that the time and attention, which he has given to his work, is ruinous to himself or family: for study is his employment, and he has been labouring in his vocation. He has innocently amused, and perhaps improved himself, though

though unable to communicate with success these advantages to others. His vanity may be pardoned, though the fruits of it cannot be praised.

But it is common in this age to find traders, and even manufacturers of a very subordinate rank, so fascinated with the brilliancy of literary fame, or so overrun with what has been called the itch of scribbling, that they devote that time and thought to tagging wretched rhymes, or penning paltry prose, which ought to be spent in providing food and cloathing for themselves and their families.

The unfortunate man, who has once contracted this lamentable distemper, immediately feels an aversion for his trade or manual employment. He considers himself as a great natural genius, who has been brought up by his injudicious parents to a business far beneath him, and for which he is totally unfit. He is too delicate for hard or disagreeable labour, and too volatile for the phlegmatic employment of a counter or a counting-house. But it is a certain truth, that we seldom succeed in the mode of life which we do not love; and distress of every kind is the certain consequence of this misplaced industry.

I wish the literary trader or mechanic to consider, how very much out of character a student by profession would appear, were he to invade the province of the workshop, and to lay down the pen and the book for the chisel or the hammer, or the last, or the needle, or the trowel. He would succeed but ill in his studies, if he chose to spend his time at the counter and in the warehouse, instead of the library; and the trader and mechanic may assure themselves, that, notwithstanding the flattering suggestions of their own vanity, they usually appear no less absurd, and succeed no less unhappily, in writing verses, than the student would in making a shoe, or retailing cheese and haberdashery.

This unhappy rage for wasting paper is not only attended with the loss of fame, but of money. The materials necessary for printing, and the modes of announcing the important production to the public, are unavoidably attended with considerable expence; and, alas! the sale is usually so inconsiderable, as scarcely to

pay for the wear of pens, and the consumption of ink. But it is really lamentable to see that money unnecessarily expended on paper and print, which ought to go to butchers, bakers, brewers, and chandlers. I cannot help thinking it a benevolent action, when the periodical publications treat productions, which originate from such authors, with sarcasm and ridicule. Though the lash of criticism may make the simple culprit smart for a little while, it may have a most beneficial effect on him, in saving him and his family from starving. A mercantile or mechanical author swelled with fancied importance, and neglecting his business in pursuit of literary fame, would furnish no bad topic for theatrical ridicule. Indeed, any effectual method of exploding a folly, which is so pregnant with misery in private life, is greatly desirable; and no treatment can be so effectual in suppressing what originates in vanity, as that which mortifies it most, contempt and ridicule.

But this literary madness of the trading and mechanical orders displays itself in various symptoms. If it produces many writers, I believe, it produces more orators. They who cannot write, or at least cannot spell, are more inclined to let their genius evaporate by the volubility of the tongue than of the pen; by which method their defects in the science of orthography are concealed in elegance and pathos of elocution. The subjects are invariably politics and religion. If they can read, they derive political arguments from newspaper essays, and religious from Bolingbroke, Tindal, and the rest of that low and contemptible set of writers. If they cannot read, they succeed better still; for then the arguments must necessarily proceed from immediate inspiration. The scene in which these rivals of Cicero and Demosthenes chiefly shine, when they defend religion, is in the fields near Bedlam; and when they fight against church and state, it is in those schools of oratory, which lately enabled London to vie with Athens.

Now, I wish I could prevail on those redoubtable rhetoricians to be hearers as well as speakers, and to listen to a very powerful and pathetic species of oratory, the cries and distress of a family at home, reduced to a state of starving, while the orator, instead of mending

foals

foals and heelpieces, or vending small wares, is disgorging nonsense on an audience of fools, who must be even more foolish than himself, if they are able to listen to him with patience.

To all writers and orators, who might be much more usefully and honourably employed at the anvil or the loom, in the shop or the counting-house, I will recommend the consideration of how many requisites are necessary to form a distinguished writer and a good orator. No man can communicate what is valuable to others, unless he has himself previously accumulated a plentiful store. A liberal education, and much reading and reflection, superadded to a competent share of natural ability, can alone enable a writer to produce what may deserve the attention of a polished age. More leisure than can fall to the lot of those who live by mercantile or manual industry, is necessary to attain an eminence in literature. And with respect to the oratory which some of the lower orders are so fond of affecting, it is usually a habit of vain and noisy babbling, little dissimilar to the ravings of madness, and not unfrequently leading to it. I have myself seen the dreadful effects of methodistical enthusiasm. Many an honest taylor or shoemaker has turned preacher, and hurried himself, and many of his hearers, into absolute lunacy. And even that kind of speechifying, which some persons in the mercantile walks of life are so fond of displaying in clubs, committees, and associations, often tends to no other purpose but to waste time, and fill the speaker with a self-conceit, which sometimes terminates in his ruin, by giving his ambition a wrong direction. I am well assured, that a misplaced attention to letters, and a foolish vanity in scribbling in newspapers and periodical repositories, has contributed greatly to increase the number of advertisements in the London Gazette.

Nothing can be more laudable than that merchants, traders, and mechanics, should fill up their intervals of leisure in reading books adapted to their various tastes, abilities, and previous improvements. But they must be cautious, lest the charms of literary pursuits operate upon them in such a manner as to bring on

that fatal disemper, the scribbling itch, or the rage of oratory. The manuscripts which they should delight in composing should be day-books, ledgers, bills, and letters to correspondents, and their rhetoric should chiefly be displayed behind the counter. The more of these the better; but when figures give place to rhymes, and posing to prosing, beware of a commission of bankrupt.

The evil which I endeavour to remove is really a serious one. The poor scribbler or prater may be a very good man; but his weakness, in this respect, will probably involve him in miseries which weakness alone cannot deserve. His ill success as an author, followed as it will be with slights, ridicule, and censure, must be to him a perpetual source of vexation. Thus his favourite pursuit terminates in disappointment, and his necessary pursuit, his trade or employment, on which he depends for bread, fails to supply him, because it is neglected.

It is one of the best ornaments, as well as the surest means of success and happiness, in all the branches of the mercantile life, to be steady in an attention to what is called the main chance. Letters may form the amusement of the trader, not his business. But letters will soon be the business of his life, if he devotes himself to composition, and learns to pant for literary fame. Letters, pursued within proper limits, will give his mind an elegance, and prevent it from being contracted by a constant attention to lucre; but cultivated with the ardour and constancy of a professed student, they seldom fail of bringing on a complication of distress, to which their satisfactions cannot be a counterpoise. It would not be a bad rule, if merchants and manufacturers, who feel an inclination to poetry, and other literary labours, were always to make a point of providing for their wives and daughters, before they think of devoting themselves to those fantastic and extravagant mistresses, Thalia, Melpomene, and their seven sisters.

No. LVI. HINTS TO THOSE WHO ARE DESIGNED FOR A MEXCANTILE LIFE.

IT is no wonder that many fail in their employments and professions, when it is considered by what slender and childish motives they are often fixed in the pursuit, which is to continue for life. One boy admires a red coat and a cockade, or a pair of trowsers and a jacket, and therefore he will be a soldier or a sailor. Another thinks it cannot but be a perpetual source of happiness to live amidst a profusion of plums and sugar, and therefore he will be a grocer. An early and accidental association of ideas is formed, by which happiness is united with some peculiar mode of life, and a choice is made before reason or experience can possibly have suggested a cause for judicious preference.

The choice of boys at an early age is certainly too ill-founded to direct their parents in fixing their future mode of life. What success can be expected in a plan of conduct which originates in the whim of an infant? A parent therefore must study the disposition of his child, and endeavour to conform it to that profession or trade, to which he has the best opportunity of introducing him with advantage. The young mind may be moulded like wax, with a due degree of skill, to almost any figure.

In an insular country like ours, where a great part of the commodities consumed by the people are imported, trade must of necessity constitute the employment of the majority. I consider it therefore of very great consequence, that particular instructions should be adapted to young persons, whose lives are to be spent in the engagements of commerce. They are usually fixed at the desk and the counter at so early an age, as almost to exclude all instruction, but that which relates to the confined views of one particular occupation. Were I to offer advice to a young man intended for the commercial

mercial walk, I would address him in a manner somewhat similar to the following. It is impossible that what I say should be exactly accommodated to all circumstances and situations; but yet it may suggest to all such hints as are capable of improvement and particular application.

“ The wisdom of our ancestors has prescribed, that
“ seven years shall be spent in learning the exercise of
“ a trade or a mechanical art. This, like many other
“ of their institutions, which the vanity of the present
“ age is apt to despise, is founded on substantial reasons. Supposing you to begin at fourteen, seven years
“ bring you to the age of twenty-one; a period, at
“ which it is quite early enough to assume the liberty
“ of manhood. Nor indeed can those habits be formed
“ with certainty, which are to continue during life, in
“ a shorter space.

“ Seven years, however, it must be confessed, are
“ a very considerable portion of life at any age, and
“ particularly valuable in the vernal season, when the
“ seeds of every amiable and useful quality are to be
“ sown and cultivated. You will therefore be particularly careful to employ it in a constant application
“ to useful pursuits.

“ The knowledge of your particular business will
“ claim, after your moral and religious duties, your
“ first and longest attention. Be not afraid of incurring among your companions the appellation of a
“ dull cit or a spiritless plodder. Such names are usually the poor consolations of those, who envy the
“ happiness which must attend the propriety of your
“ conduct. Proceed therefore in the regular performance of your duties, animated by the approbation of
“ your own heart, and of your friends and superintendants, and despising that ridicule which originates only in malice, though it has been sufficiently
“ powerful to ruin many. I need not inform you,
“ that writing, arithmetic, book-keeping, and all the
“ particular mysteries, as they are called, of your particular occupation, will leave you little time for inaction. The less, indeed, the better. Vice and
“ misery are almost the certain consequences of your
“ not

“ not knowing how to employ your time. Great cities, where commerce is chiefly carried on, abound with temptations, and few are found more frequently in the haunts of debauchery and dissipation than clerks and apprentices.

“ Since however it is impossible but that you should have some leisure, I very seriously recommend it to you to acquire a taste for good books; I say good books, for you may injure your mind, and ruin your fortune, by an indiscriminate and improper choice. The readers in your way of life seldom read any thing but novels, plays, and licentious productions of every species. Besides that these have a tendency to corrupt the morals of young men in general, they have usually an influence peculiarly hurtful on the mind of the young trader; for they almost invariably represent the essential virtues of a trader, such as honesty, sobriety, punctuality, and industry, as contemptible and ridiculous. The very name and character of a trader appear in them in a low and vulgar light. The object held out as a model for imitation is usually some dissipated rake, who, with every vice and unfortunate failing which tends to make himself miserable, and to break a parent's heart, is represented as a fine fellow, and as the object of love and admiration.

“ Let me intreat you to summon resolution enough to avoid such reading till your judgment is mature, your passions regulated, and your principles formed. If you have been fortunate enough to have acquired a little knowledge of the classics at your school, preserve and improve it. Read and reflect upon the histories of Greece, Rome, and your own country. There are books of morality in the English language as full of entertainment for a mind unvitiated as any novel.

“ A taste for good books will have a happy influence on your temper, and will tend to secure your conduct, not only by filling up your time innocently, but by suggesting to your mind wise rules and useful maxims. They will teach you to know yourself and your situation, and to set a just value on those

“ things which ignorant avarice and ambition pursue
“ with restless avidity, and at the same time without
“ any genuine enjoyment. They will enlarge your
“ views, and give you a liberality of sentiment and
“ manners. If you attend solely to the means of get-
“ ting money, your mind will gradually become nar-
“ row. You will consider money as the only good.
“ Your eyes and your heart will be shut to all those
“ other objects of delight, with which the God of
“ nature has profusely furnished the residence of his
“ favourite creature. This is an enlightened age; and
“ the man of fortune, but illiberal mind, must be pi-
“ tied, despised, and neglected. He will find few
“ associates, but among those who are as vulgar as
“ himself, and whose riches, if they possess riches,
“ cannot render them respectable. But moderation is
“ necessary in that which is laudable, and while I re-
“ commend to you an attention to letters, I must re-
“ mind you, that they are only to form your recre-
“ ation and not your business. Be contented with
“ reading. Beware of scribbling verses when you ought
“ to be posting your accounts. A little applause
“ bestowed on your rhymes may be your ruin. It may
“ give your ambition a wrong object, and lead you
“ astray, like the dancing vapour of a misty evening.
“ Be cautious of raising your ideas above your situation.
“ Dare to be what you really are; and, if you think
“ your situation and character require to be elevated
“ and adorned, elevate and adorn them yourself by ex-
“ emplary behaviour. If you wish to become respect-
“ able, you will succeed by raising the sphere in which
“ you are placed, but not by shewing, that you think
“ it too humble for a person of your exalted ideas.

“ You must beware of entertaining too early the
“ fatal affectation of shining as a fine gentleman and
“ a man of pleasure. To support these characters,
“ supposing them consistent with innocence, a fund of
“ money is absolutely necessary. It can be procured
“ only by importuning and offending a parent, by
“ incurring debt, or by fraudulent practices; each of
“ which methods is almost a certain source of ruin and
“ infamy. Add to this, that he who is always adorn-
“ ing

“ ing his person, and frequenting theatres, assemblies,
“ and public gardens, will be so over-run with folly
“ and vanity, that no room will be left for the solid
“ virtues of the sober citizen. Before the expiration
“ of his apprenticeship, he will probably grow sick of
“ his trade, get an ensigncy, if his father can afford to
“ purchase one, and, if not, turn strolling player, and
“ at last, instead of becoming an alderman, or a re-
“ spectable private citizen, degenerate to an infamous
“ swindler.

“ I consider the manner in which a Sunday is spent
“ in a great city, by the young men who are trained to
“ trade and merchandize, as a matter of the highest
“ consequence to their happiness. The master and
“ mistress of the family are then usually at their
“ country-house; or engaged in some rural excursion.
“ There is no restraint and no amusement at home.
“ The apprentice or clerk is glad to make use of his
“ liberty, and to fly from the solitude of a deserted
“ house. Parties of pleasure are formed; improper
“ and even vicious connections made; and the poor
“ young man often dates his greatest misfortunes from
“ that day, the institution of which was designed to
“ increase the virtue and happiness of mankind. Part
“ of the day may be very reasonably and usefully de-
“ voted to innocent relaxation; but let that part con-
“ sist of the intervals between divine service, or of
“ that which remains at its conclusion. Sunday af-
“ fords a fine opportunity for indulging an inclination
“ for reading; and I have no doubt, but that, in
“ a few hours spent in this decent and profitable man-
“ ner, there would be more pleasure than in galloping
“ along the city-road, and driving a high phaeton to
“ Richmond or to Windsor.

“ I have been thus particular in suggesting advice to
“ you for the conduct of an apprenticeship, because
“ good conduct during that dangerous period is a very
“ promising presage of future success. I make use of
“ the word Apprenticeship, though I know that many
“ are introduced to the superior houses of merchandize
“ without the form of indentures, and without a li-
“ mited term of preparation. But whatever time is
M 6 “ spent

“ spent in preparation, and whether it is spent at the
 “ counter or at the desk, the hints which I have thrown
 “ out may, I hope, be sometimes serviceable. If they
 “ save but one out of a thousand from ruin, I shall be
 “ amply repaid.

“ I will add but one more rule, and that shall be a
 “ general one. Learn to place a due value on the
 “ plain and homely qualities of common honesty, punct-
 “ tuality, diligence, and œconomy. Were these pur-
 “ sued with half the ardor with which the graces are
 “ courted, and the vices adopted, there would be fewer
 “ bankrupts than there are, notwithstanding the Ame-
 “ rican war. Bad times are indeed injurious to com-
 “ merce, and so also are bad manners in the conductors
 “ of it. When both are combined in a remarkable
 “ degree, it is not to be wondered, that there are com-
 “ plainings in our streets.

“ With a mind enlightened and enlarged by proper
 “ education, and a heart furnished with sound prin-
 “ ciples, if you have fair opportunities, you will not often
 “ fail. You will probably rise to that honourable cha-
 “ racter, a British merchant, who has acquired opulence
 “ with unshaken integrity, and who is able to enjoy and
 “ adorn it with a noble liberality.”

No. LVII. ON THE SELFISHNESS OF MEN OF THE WORLD.

THE professed students of the art of pleasing, usu-
 ally possess some qualities, which, when seen in
 their true light, and without the varnish of deceit, are
 peculiarly unpleasing. Indeed, the very motive which
 urges them to study this celebrated art, is in itself most
 odious, as it consists of a desire to serve themselves
 alone, at the expence of every virtue connected with
 sincerity, and by making those the dupes of their arti-
 fice, whose honesty has rendered them as unsuspecting
 as they are amiable.

We all love ourselves, indeed, sufficiently well; but he who labours indiscriminately to please every one with whom he converses, however paradoxical the assertion may appear, is usually of all men the most selfish. A sincerely good and benevolent man will study to serve and to please men, in proportion as they may deserve his attention, and as they may be pleased and served consistently with truth and honesty. He will be the friend of individuals; but always more a friend to truth than to any particular man. He will study to please, where he can do it without deceit, and without meanly sacrificing the liberty of a man, and accommodating his own opinions to the opinions of any company to which chance may introduce him. But the mere man of this world has learned to consider truth and sincerity as words only; such indeed as may, on some occasions, facilitate the practice of his art, but must never injure, what is superior in his idea to all considerations, his own interest.

This sort of persons is skilled to assume the appearance of all virtues and all good qualities; but their favourite mask is universal benevolence. And the reason why they prefer this disguise to all others is, that it tends most effectually to conceal its opposite, which is indeed their true character, an universal selfishness.

It is a maxim with them, that as there is no individual who may not, in the vicissitudes of human affairs, have an opportunity of serving or injuring them, there is none whose favour they ought not to court. They are therefore universally affable and obliging. So condescending are they, that one would almost imagine them to be totally exempt from pride; but after they have treated you with the most insinuating familiarity, should you happen to meet them in the company of your superiors, it is probable they will not know you, and, if you venture to accost them, will beg the favour of your name. When they have any favour to ask of you, or are accidentally in your company where you happen to be the principal person, they admire, flatter, and shew you all possible attention; but, meet them soon afterwards at a public place of resort, arm in arm with a lord, and they will pass close by you, and never see you. They either look straight forwards, or they are engaged in laughing at
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my lord's jest, or they really forget you. Whatever is the cause, their hats remain on their heads, and you endeavour to catch their eye in vain. You then begin to see, that these prodigiously agreeable, affable, clever, obliging gentlemen, are no more than mean, unprincipled, selfish, and sycophantic deceivers.

If you were to judge of them by their dress, appearance, equipage, and conversation, you would imagine these agreeable men to be generous as well as agreeable. But, in truth, their generosity extends only to themselves and their expences consist chiefly in providing matters of external ostentation. These they find conducive to the great end in view, the attracting notice, and making advantageous connections. After all their boasts, they are usually hard and extortionate in their bargains with the honest tradesmen who supply necessities; they seldom hesitate at any mode of getting or saving money while it can be kept clandestine; and, though they are profuse at a watering-place, they are often contemptibly penurious among their poor neighbours, and at their own tables. They play at cards, at which they are great adepts, and therefore prodigiously clever and agreeable men; but though they declare the contrary, they play for gain rather than diversion. With all their vanity, love of shew, love of pleasure, and love of dissipation, they are also most powerfully actuated by the love of money.

Self-regard, indeed, is evidently the principle of all their conduct. They appear in their own eyes of vast magnitude, and consider the rest of mankind as instruments, which they may manage, with a little cunning, so as to render them subservient to their own pleasure or to profit. They do indeed too often succeed, and raise themselves to fortunes and reputation by deluding the simple and inconsiderate. They are therefore often admired as truly wise, and not unfrequently pointed out as models for imitation.

But I cannot help thinking, that however they are admired, and whatever success they may obtain, they are both despicable and unhappy. By servilely cringing to all, and especially to the great, without attending to personal defects and characters, they render themselves, in effect,

effect, absolute slaves, and their minds soon contract all the meanness of slavery. Such meanness is certainly contemptible, nor can I conceive that such slavery, with any fortune or connections whatever, can by any means be capable of manly enjoyment. Liberty, independence, and a consciousness of having acted uprightly, will render a state of indigence sweet; and the want of them must embitter the envied blessings of rank and opulence. Providence has, indeed, so ordered it, for the sake of promoting the important ends of society, that they, who live to self-interest and self-love, exclusively of all social regards, should be disappointed in their purposes. Immoderate selfishness, like all other greedy dispositions, sacrifices the present for that future enjoyment which never arrives to mortal man. But the selfishness of the mere man of the world has this aggravation, that it leads to the neglect of some of the most amiable virtues, and to the commission of crimes of the blackest dye. So that the character I have delineated is incompatible with a good conscience, and, without a good conscience, what a phantom is all human bliss? After all the triumphs of wordly wisdom, and the contempt in which simplicity is held, I am convinced, that it is far better to be the deceived than the deceivers.

At the same time it is certainly right to warn young men of the deceits of the world, and teach them not rashly to believe, that those characters are most excellent which appear most plausible. I would briefly advise them, whenever they see a man remarkably studious of external appearances, devoted to the graces of dress and address, pretending great friendship and regard for persons whom he never saw before, promising liberally, perpetually smiling, and *always agreeable*—to beware of counterfeits, for such are abroad.

No. LVIII. ON THE FOLLY OF DENYING
THAT HOMER HAS FAULTS, SINCE HIS
BEAUTIES ARE SUCH AS PREVENT HIS
FAULTS FROM BECOMING DISGUSTFUL.

CRITICISM has been often employed in illustrating the beauties of authors who need not the illustration. The excellent productions of genius are immediately felt by all who possess sensibility. To those who do not, it is to little purpose that elucidations are addressed. Writers who copy from nature, will find admirers among those to whom nature has given the noble privilege of feeling all that is capable of affecting humanity, and will readily forego the attention of readers, who must be taught by the instructions of art, to understand those excellencies which were formed to be felt and tasted.

In reading Homer, every sensible mind feels itself animated with a warmth approaching to enthusiasm. A vivacity of expression, a sonorous language, an undescribable fire, the very essence of genius, rouse and gratify all the nobler affections of the human breast. A sweet simplicity calls forth the milder emotions of love and esteem, while the more elevated passages produce the just effect of real sublimity.

Such is the sympathetic glow, which the reader acquires in the perusal of Homer, that he forgets those defects which are discoverable, by a very small share of critical sagacity. The constant recurrence of the same epithets, and the repetition of the same lines, however they may be palliated by the undistinguishing partiality of editors and translators, are certainly faults. They proceeded from a carelessness, perhaps an indolence, which indeed is easily pardoned in genius; but at the same time it must be remembered, that what admits of pardon must be blameable.

The illustrators of this mighty genius have incurred just ridicule, in pointing out beauties never intended, and

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in refining even blemishes into becoming graces. It is a truth confirmed by daily experience, that an object, which has once fixed the affections, blinds the judgment. Thus it happens in common life, thus too in the arts. Horace was a man of a truly elegant taste, and no blind admirer. He has ventured to pronounce, that Homer sometimes nods: a truth, which his bigoted readers are very unwilling to allow. Homer's most verbal repetitions, and his coarsest language, are represented as the effect of that simplicity, which, when it is genuine, is allowed to be his characteristic excellence. But they are surely inadequate judges of the merit of compositions, who know not to discriminate between rudeness and simplicity.

From the reluctance which the admirers of Homer have always shewn to confess the obvious fault of his productions, it might perhaps have been concluded, that his beauties were too few to admit the avowal of a partial deformity. Yet the truth is, that, with all his imperfections on his head, he deserves that admiration which has been lavishly paid to him by the general voice of mankind. His spots, like those of the sun, to use a common similitude, are lost in surrounding light.

Every part of the *Iliad* glows with life; and none but such as are totally devoid of that genius with which it abounds, can pause long enough to be disgusted with minuter defects occasioned by an attention to beauties. Zoilus deserved his fate. He attended only to the defects of Homer; but his fate has frightened succeeding critics, and induced them to deny the existence of defects in the poet whom they admired.

I repeat, that criticism is seldom so idly employed as when it illustrates the productions of self-evident genius. Such genius carries its own radiant light with it. It makes itself felt by its own native force, and bears all before it by an irresistible momentum.

The experience of ages has proved, that the excellences of Homer possess power over the human heart, which might almost be called magical. His works have been wandering up and down the world during a longer period than those of any profane writer of equal authenticity. Yet are there no books which have come down

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to us with so little injury from the hand of time. Very few interpolations, and scarcely any chasms, are to be found in him. The cause of his superiority in this respect is indisputably, that he was always the object of general attention, that his verses were not only in the libraries, but in the hands, in the memories, and in the mouths of all who possessed a taste for poetry, and enjoyed opportunities for its cultivation.

In what consists this irresistible charm, this all powerful influence? It is unquestionably a combination of all the fine qualities which genius can infuse; and among these, if I may venture to advance the opinion, the diction is the chief. The sound is every where an echo to the sense, the pauses are varied with the nicest judgment, both for the purpose of impressing the idea more forcibly, and of touching the ear with that melody, which, when duly produced, is capable of exciting in the mind the liveliest emotions. Milton has left all modern writers far behind him in the judicious variation of his pause. Homer excells him and all others. To this unrivalled excellence of a judicious disposition of the pauses, Homer adds such an artful inversion of words, as immediately directs the attention, and fixes the accent on the most important or significant expression in the metrical period. He enjoyed the advantage of a magnificent language, still further improved by commixture of the Ionic and all the other dialects. With such materials, and such skill, no wonder he has produced a work, which all, who can read it with facility, read with pleasure.

The beauties of language arise from two sources; the selection of words and their collocation. Many writers have excelled in one of these beauties, and have been totally deficient in the other. Homer has most happily united them, and produced that powerful effect, which must ever result from their judicious combination.

To enlarge on the excellencies of Homer, after the repeated illustrations and remarks of the most ingenious critics, seems superfluous. He has been the idol of kingdoms, the favourite of princes, and all antiquity has been unanimous in his praise. The moderns have, for the most part, fully entered into the feelings of the ancients, have acknowledged the justness of all their eulogia of
Homer,

Homer, and have added to the general acclamation. But though this is true, yet it is no less certain, that in these times, and in some countries on the continent, an attention to Homer has been discouraged by those to whom fashion has given influence. His manners, his sentiments, his language, have been stigmatised, by the admirers of French refinement, as coarse and vulgar. Chesserfield has called his language porter-like. The veneration in which he has ever been held is insolently attributed to that prejudice, by which superficial pretenders are disposed to account for all the best and most amiable notions, which the world has long adopted in morals, in religion, and in literature.

It must not be deemed a judgment too severe, when we venture to suggest, that the modern Zoili often condemn that which they do not understand. It is probable, that many of them have never read Homer but in their own languages. It is certain, that some of the severest of them have read him only in those literal Latin interpretations, which are usually subjoined in the common editions. From such poor representations, they can scarcely have a juster idea of the great Mæonian, than of the immense ocean from the view of a canal.

It is not to be doubted but that many, who are disqualified from judging, both by the deficiency of their education and their idleness, frequently labour to bring into disrepute those studies, with the nature of which they are totally unacquainted. By dint of effrontery and artifice, they often succeed. But liberal scholars must wish, without any view to interest, that their attainments may be justly appreciated by their contemporaries, and will therefore exert themselves to counteract the dissingenuous attempts of those, who endeavour to lower them and their pursuits in the eyes of mankind.

No. LIX. ON THE CELEBRATED HISTORIAN
THUANUS, OR DE THOU.

THE history of this illustrious writer includes a period of sixty-three years, beginning about the middle of the sixteenth century, and closing at the commencement of the seventeenth.

Though his life was active, for he was president of the parliament of Paris, yet he found time and attention to write a very voluminous and circumstantial history. He adds to the number of those examples, which tend to prove, that a contemplative is compatible with a busy life. Many of the most eminent writers have been engaged in public employments, have spent a great portion of their lives in voyages and travels undertaken on political affairs, and have only possessed that time for literary pursuits, which they snatched from the anxious concerns of the cabinet and the field. Grotius, in an epistle to Thuanus, expresses a great degree of surprise, that the historian was able to compose such a work amidst a variety of public business. Thuanus might have expressed a reciprocal astonishment; for the very learned and voluminous Grotius was engaged in public life, and was sent by the court of Sweden ambassador to France. The powers of the human mind are indeed capable of an extension beyond what it is easy to conceive; and he who is impelled by necessity to exert himself strenuously and steadily, will soon be surprised at his own advancement. In a life of action and public employment, a thousand incitements arise, which the solitary student never feels. The love of praise, the fear of disgrace, the presence of witnesses, the glow excited by strenuous exertion, call forth all the latent energies of the soul, and stimulate it to achieve the most honourable undertakings. But diffidence, dejection of spirits, and habitual indolence, often preclude every efficient exertion of the
sedentary

sedentary student, who lives and dies in the recesses of a library.

The history of Thuanus excites a great share of respect immediately on entering on the perusal of it. The solemn declaration, in which he calls God and men to witness, that he wrote his history for the glory of God, and the good of mankind, without resentment or partiality; the strong and repeated protestations that truth is his only guide, warmly interest the reader in his favour, and open his mind for the reception of all that follows. The very serious prayer, which closes the first book, displays a very respectable appearance of sincerity and dignity. And there is every reason to believe, that it proceeded from a mind sincerely pious, and firmly resolved to propagate the truth, and the truth only, as far as human sagacity could develope it.

The style has always been admired for its perspicuity, except in its proper names. It is also, in its general tenour, truly elegant. It would have been uniformly beautiful, if the great author had given himself the trouble to express the materials, which he received from others, in his own diction. Perhaps it arose from modesty, and perhaps from indolence, that he inserted the recitals which he received from his correspondents, or extracted from books, nearly in the words in which he found them. That part of his history, which relates to his own country, is allowed to be the best. The cause is obvious. The matter and the words were entirely his own. But though the accounts which he received from others are in a style unequal to the compiler's, yet they are not barbarous. Fortunately, he wrote at a time when the Latin was cultivated by all the scholars in Europe with indefatigable diligence. In the *Melanges d'Histoire et de Littérature*, which pass under the name of M. de Vigneul Marville, but which were written by Dargonne, Thuanus is called the Livy of France; and the purity and eloquence of his style are said to place him on a level with the best historians of Rome. National partiality may perhaps lead an ingenious critic to exaggerate the praises of his countryman; but it is certain,

tain, that, if Thuanus does not equal, he approaches, in the excellencies of style, in dignity, and in copiousness, the best models of antiquity.

One circumstance has contributed to diminish the graces of his style, which he could not well avoid. Modern names of places and of persons must abound in a work of this kind. But modern names have in general a barbarous sound in a work written in Latin. They are, in truth scarcely tolerable. Thuanus was sensible of it, and has therefore latinized them. Yet they still retain something of their uncouth sound, and, what is worse, have so far affected the perspicuity of the work, as to have rendered it totally unintelligible to the greater part of its readers, without a perpetual glossary. Thuanus did right in latinizing the names, but he has taken too great liberties. He has totally disguised them. Who but an *Œdipus* could discern that *Quadrigarius* was the Latin name of *Chartier*, or *Interamnas* of *Entragues*? *Desmarets* is translated *Paludanus*; *Dubois*, *Sylvius*; *le Sieur de Selves*, *Forellus*. *Dargonne* asserts, that our historian has translated the proper name *Joly* by the Latin *Lepidus*; but the editors observe that it is without foundation. The editors of the last fine edition have taken care to subjoin in the margin the modern names of persons and places with great fidelity; but still it is unpleasant to be often interrupted in the warmth of attention by recurring to a glossary.

All laudable predilections have been carried too far. Thus the preference for the ancients, which is undoubtedly well founded, has led many modern writers, especially those who flourished at the revival of learning, to change their Gothic names into words which had some resemblance to Roman appellations; but which, at the same time, were neither Roman nor Gothic, and served only to disguise the owners under some barbarous combination of syllables with Latin terminations. In short, the Gothicism of modern names is a great misfortune in the republic of letters; it constitutes a base alloy, which corrupts and sullies the intrinsic beauties of an elegant Latin style. Nevertheless,

less, I would advise all future writers to give the name of a place or person varied only in its termination, if varied at all; for the want of perspicuity is a defect, which no elegance can compensate.

No. LX. ON OWEN, THE LATIN EPIGRAM- MATIST.

HOWEVER absurd the taste of the age, writers of true genius will sometimes find means to render themselves conformable to it, and at the same time to claim the attention of a more enlightened period. Great ingenuity, though injudiciously and trivially employed, will ever excite the curiosity of readers, who love to observe the operation of the human faculties under the influence of the various modes of judging and writing, which, at different periods, have prevailed in the world of letters.

In the age in which Joannes Audoenus, or John Owen, was born, the lower kinds of wit were universally relished. Puns, conceits, and a wretched species of epigrams, had totally superseded that unaffected mode of expression, which nature dictates, and which cannot fail to please when nature is allowed to form a judgment. Though the taste for epigrams was universal, unfortunately the general choice did not fall on Martial. Classical expression was little studied. Any words which conveyed the idea with tolerable precision, and which, in point of quantity, were admissible into an hexameter or pentameter verse, were sure of reception. It must indeed be owned, that a very scrupulous attention was not always paid even to the quantity. Upon the whole, it is certain, that he who has formed himself upon classical models will often be disgusted with the expressions of Owen and his coeval writers, at the same time that he is surprised and pleased by the wit and jocularly of their sentiments. He will find many thoughts, which, in the management of a Martial,

would have constituted epigrams of uncommon excellence, but which, like a fine portrait in modern drapery, have lost all freedom and grace by the Gothicism of their diction.

The epigrams of Owen are so numerous as nearly to amount to two thousand. In such a number, it is to be concluded from experience, that some will be good, others moderate, and the greater part of little or no merit. The great critic Rapin has said, that it is sufficient to have written one good epigram in the course of a life. His idea of a good epigram was perhaps too exalted. Owen has written many epigrams, which please and satisfy the most judicious reader, and which therefore must be allowed to deserve the appellation of good. There is a great abundance of ingenious thoughts in every part of his little volume, and there is an ease of versification acquired and confirmed by long habit, which, in some degree, conceals the defect of unclassical language. There are also a few epigrams, which are not defective in the beauties of style.

The epigrams of Owen were much read in his own and the succeeding age, and have, in the present times, afforded amusement to the scholar, though they have not met with general attention. The neglect with which they have been received, is to be attributed to the contempt thrown on epigrammatic wit by writers of distinguished taste, who, while they justly attempted to explode a false kind of witticism, consisting of puns and miserable conceits, involved this species of composition, which at that time had indeed greatly degenerated from its original grace, in a general and undeserved censure.

Inscriptions, for such are epigrams according to the original meaning, are by no means, in their own nature, a contemptible species of composition. Preixed to statues, public buildings, sepulchral monuments, books, and applied to great characters and on great occasions, they often reflect honour, not only on their composers, but on nations and on princes. They are capable of the most elevated sublimity, as well as the most polished elegance of refined wit. From their conciseness and brevity they are easily comprehended.

and retained; and there are few scholars, who have not committed to memory some favourite epigrams, which have struck them with their pointed wit and beauty. Yet, at the same time, I have observed, that it is not agreeable to read a great collection of epigrams with an unsuspended attention. The necessary want of connection, and the continual efforts of wit, soon fatigue the mind, which, though, like the palate, it may occasionally delight in dainties, requires that its constant food should be plain and natural.

For the want of decency in some of Owen's compositions, little apology can be offered. The taste of those readers must be gross indeed, to whom indelicacy is humour, and obscenity wit. It must however be considered, that poets have at all times deemed themselves under an obligation to comply with the taste of their age, and that the age of Owen was not much refined. It was an heroic and a learned age, but it was not distinguished for delicacy.

The licentiousness of some of his works injured the poet's fortune. For Anthony Wood inform us, that Owen was distressed by poverty, the epidemical disease of poets, and that he was disappointed in the expectation of riches at the death of a wealthy uncle, who disinherited him for some of his poetry; a misfortune which several of the unthrifty followers of the Muses have rashly incurred.

With all the faults of Owen, such has been the sterility of epigrammatic genius in our country, that he may still retain the title, which he has acquired among foreigners, of the British Martial.

No. LXI. ON POLITIAN AND MURETUS,
TWO ELEGANT WRITERS OF MODERN LA-
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ONE of the brightest luminaries, which shone forth at the revival of learning, was Politian. A slight knowledge of the Greek was in his age a great and rare attainment. He not only understood the language so as to read it, but to compose in it. As a grammarian, as an orator, as a poet, he has been an object of general admiration. Genius he undoubtedly possessed in a degree superior to the laborious scholars of his times; but his poetry is notwithstanding greatly defective. In fire he abounds; but he is wanting in judgment and in art. There are many fine lines in his Rusticus, and the diction is throughout remarkably splendid, though not always purely classical. The Latin poets of this period were not, indeed, so careful of the classical purity of their style as of harmony and brilliancy. Several of the poems of Politian are florid to excess, and far beyond that boundary which Augustan taste delineates.

When we consider the state of literature at this early season, we must allow that great applause, which has been paid to such writers as Politian, justly due. They were under the necessity of breaking through a thick cloud of ignorance, and they had to contend with the rude taste of their age before their writings could gain attention. Under every difficulty, they arrived, by extraordinary efforts of emulation and genius, to a degree of excellence, which greatly resembled that of the models which they selected for imitation.

The Greek verses, which he wrote at a very early age, are highly commended. He prefixed the age in which he wrote them. Scaliger says he should not have done this; for they are so excellent, that even Latin verses, which he wrote when a man, are by no means equal to them.

The Letters of Politian are indisputably elegant; but they are not without their faults. The style is sometimes too elevated and oratorical. For the sake of introducing a favourite phrase, he often goes too far out of his way, and overburthens the sense and the expression by a redundancy of words.

With all his faults, I must confess I have read him with great pleasure. There is a charm in true genius, which compensates defects, and often conceals them from the view.

Politian's real name was Bassus. His assumed name was taken from the place of his birth. The adoption of names entirely new, was, at one time, not uncommon. Thus the real name of Erasmus was Gerard. There was perhaps some degree of blameable ostentation in assuming the appellations of Desiderius and Erasmus, both of which, according to their respective etymology, signify the amiable or the desirable. Politian's adopted name was also chosen with a view to convey a favourable idea of his character. It is not improbable, that it was thought to express, what indeed its derivation may intimate, a *polished* taste and understanding.

It is remarkable of Muretus, another elegant Latinist of modern ages, that he acquired a perfect knowledge of the Greek and Latin languages; in the latter of which he wrote most elegantly, without an instructor.

He composed various critical and poetical works; but his Orations have always been celebrated as his best productions. They are indeed formed on the pattern of Cicero; they are written in a rapid and flowing style, and are not destitute of judicious observations. But, with respect to his diction, it must be said of him, that he is less careful in the selection, than in the disposition of words. This defect arose from a blameable precipitation, of which authors have sometimes been vain.

We are told, that Muretus never transcribed any of his writings, that he scarcely ever read his productions twice, that he seldom made a change or interpolation, and still less frequently a blot. This may account for

his faults, but it cannot excuse them. It is an insult on mankind, to present them with a work less perfect than the author might have rendered it. Haste and carelessness have often been avowed by writers, who wished to exalt the general opinion of their abilities; but they have usually, and as they deserved, lost that lasting and undiminished reputation which they might have enjoyed. While an author lives, prejudice and party may support his fame; but, when he is dead, these soon subside, and his real merit can alone preserve him from oblivion. Muretus has been justly and severely censured for having bestowed praises on the execrable massacre at Paris on St. Bartholomew's day.

He imitates Cicero; but, like a servile imitator, he imitates that which was least beautiful in his model. The very diffuse style of the Roman is still more diffuse in the orations of Muretus. The Asiatic manner, even in its best state, is not agreeable to a correct taste. It prevented the works of the greatest orator whom the world ever saw from being universally admired; and, when it is presented to the reader with aggravated deformity, it can scarcely be rendered tolerable by any concomitant beauties.

The Epistles of Muretus, though often elegant, are improperly written in the oratorial, rather than in the epistolary style. He seems to have studied and admired the Orations of Cicero more than his Epistles.

Muretus has been greatly commended for his poetry. Scævola Sammarthanus says of him, that Catullus is not more like himself than he to Catullus. I have not been able to discover any peculiar grace, either of sentiment or style, in the few little poems which remain on sacred subjects. But there are several on other occasions which are very pleasing, and far surpass, in classical purity and in sentiment, most of the Latin compositions of the age of Muretus. In the very pretty epitaph on Raphael there is a manifest impropriety, in representing the painter as praising himself in the highest style of commendation.

The verses entitled Tibur are pretty. The prologue to Terence's *Phormio* is easy and elegant. The Initi-

tutio Puerilis was intended to be no more than useful. The whole collection will furnish entertainment to him who has formed a taste for modern, as well as ancient, Latin Poetry. Catullus and Tibullus were evidently his patterns; but Rapin thinks, that, by an excessive affectation of fine Latinity, his odes are rendered stiff and unnatural.

It is true, that there are many succeeding writers who have excelled Muretus both in verse and prose; but his real excellencies, and the great reputation which he has possessed, will justly render him an object of attention to him, who, from his love of letters, becomes interested in the works of all who have contributed to advance their progress.

No. LXII. ON THE POET VIDA.

VIDA was born at Cremona, a city in Italy, at no great distance from the birth place of the poet whom he imitated. As a reward for his ingenious labours, the pope gave him the bishopric of Alba. He died at the age of fifty-nine, in the year 1566.

There is perhaps no modern Latin poet more celebrated than Vida. He is justly recorded by the great De Thou, as one of the first among the Italians who applied poetry to sacred subjects. He adds, that he adorned this province with pure and elegant verse. This praise is certainly due to him; but some of the more zealous religionists seem to have endeavoured to recommend his sacred poems as the best of his works. Even Scaliger, who censures his hymns as puerile, asserts that his Christiad deserves the highest praise. The truth is, that his Christiad is the worst of his greater works. He was sensible of it. He entered upon it with reluctance, and apologized for its defects with great diffidence, in an inscription subjoined to the poem. He speaks very modestly of his performance in his Epistle to Botta, and seems desirous that his

friends, and all the world should know, that he undertook so arduous a task solely with a view to shew his gratitude in obeying his patrons. Besides many dull and heavy passages, which must occur to every reader, it is certain, that the poem falls short of the dignity of its subject in almost every part. Among other faults, the critics have observed, that Vida has put into the mouths of Joseph and St. John two speeches, as long as those of *Aeneas* to *Dido*, to be uttered while *Jesus Christ* was conveyed to the tribunal of *Pilate*. It is not to be supposed, say they, that the president of the council could have time or patience, in the midst of a tumult, to attend to a long recital of all the particulars of the birth, education, and actions of our Saviour; besides that, St. John is introduced explaining matters, of which himself could have had no certain knowledge till after the day of *Pentecost*.

But it is not pleasant to dwell on the enumeration of defects. Almost every writer of genius has been sometimes led to compose against his inclination. The advice and importunity of friends or the necessities of particular situations and emergencies, have called forth a task at a time when the fine impulses of genius have lain dormant. And it may be remarked, to the honour of *Vida*, that his most unpoetical works do credit to his heart and to his piety. This cannot be said of the trivial writings of many of our most celebrated authors, which have sometimes deviated, not only into absurdity, but likewise into immorality.

Vida himself, were he alive, would probably chuse his three books of *Poetics*, his *Bombyces*, and his *Scacchia*, to form the basis of his reputation. These certainly possess a portion of *Virgilian* beauty. Though it is but a small portion, it diffuses a lustre, which attracts and detains the notice of the classical reader. He undoubtedly practised the precept which he has given in his *Poetics*, of making *Virgil* the only object of imitation.

It is certainly of great consequence to the student, who wishes to acquire the style of a particular author, not to distract his attention by the perusal of many others.

others. Vida, though successful in his imitation, furnishes an additional proof, how difficult it is for the moderns to contend with the ancients. He has many verses interspersed, which Virgil would not be ashamed to own; but he does not support that dignified uniformity of elegance, which places the Mantuan in a rank superior to all others, in the excellence of correct, delicate and dignified beauty. The first book contains many sweet passages. Particularly agreeable is the description of the marks of a young genius, and its progress in poetical efforts. The whole performance is highly pleasing, contains many useful hints, and deserves the commendations of our English essayist on the art of criticism.

Modern eclogues in Latin have become too common to attract much notice when they are not remarkably excellent. They have been the trite medium of conveying the complaints of the surviving friend and the desponding lover; and indeed have, by a little awkward contrivance, served to communicate even political doctrines and ideas. Virgil, it is true, set the example, and it has been followed by Spencer and many others, even to a ridiculous degree. Vida's Eclogues, as they are laborious imitations of Virgil's style, have a considerable share of grace and delicacy. The Epistle to the celebrated Gibertus is full of tender sentiment, and exhibits that ease of language, which proves it to have flowed from the heart.

The Bombyces, or the Art of managing Silk-worms, has the same kind of merit, resulting from a close imitation of Virgil. It exhibits an equable flow of elegant verse, but, I think, presents not any striking passages; though Scaliger says, it is the best of all Vida's works. It was a very proper present to a lady, the Marchioness of Mantua, to whom it is dedicated.

It is said, that by reading the poem called Scacchia, or the Game of Chess, a person may learn to play it with skill. However that may be, the poem has always been admired for its ingenuity and elegance. The game of chess, indeed, the most ancient and the most generally known of all others, deserves attention, were

it merely on account of its antiquity and universal acceptance. Montaigne asserts, that it is too serious for a game; and it is certainly consistent with reason, that games, which were adopted for recreation, should not require a degree of painful attention.

Vida's odes are pretty, but seem not to rise to any exalted degree of excellence. The Lamentation on the Death of his Parents, William Vida and Leona Oscasala, has many tender and affecting thoughts, which fully prove that it came from the heart. This, and a few other pathetic passages in his poems, evince that he would have excelled in elegiac poetry, if he had chosen to compose it.

Notwithstanding some trifling inequalities, and many dull passages, where genius seems to be eclipsed by labour, the whole collection does honour to the taste of the poet and his times. It is formed on the best models, and every where displays marks of an amiable disposition, as well as of a poetical and classical talent. It is always benevolent and friendly to virtue; or, as he says himself, his numbers please, if they please at all, without guilt, and without the bitterness of satire.

No. LXIII. ON THE LATIN POET SANNAZARIUS.

ABOUT the time at which learning arose, as it were, from the dead, there appeared an illustrious race of writers in Latin verse, whose force of genius, and elegance of language, entitle them to rank among the most celebrated of modern poets, with our Drydens, Priors, Popes, and Parnells.

Parnell indeed, it is well known, borrowed several of his pieces from the modern Latin poets; and Pope is justly thought to have improved himself by the perusal of them. Pope was so great an admirer of the Italian writers, who had chiefly excelled in Latin poetry, that he published a select collection of their detached

tached pieces. There happened, at that time, to prevail a prejudice against modern Latin poetry, occasioned by a capricious censure of it by Boileau, and therefore these volumes were not greatly regarded: but we may readily believe, that a collection conducted by the taste of Pope, could not but abound in beauty. His two volumes were indeed, but an amplification of a small edition published by an anonymous, but very judicious compiler; and Pope is blamed by a sensible though severe remarker on his life, for omitting the original preface. The preface of the anonymous editor is, indeed, equally remarkable for its modesty and taste; and I conjecture it to have been the production of some Cambridge student; as the book, though printed in London, was printed at the expence of Cambridge booksellers. The editor makes very short yet judicious remarks on the several poets who compose his collection, particularly on Sannazarius, Fracastorius, Vida, Politian, and Castiglione. He has placed Sannazarius first in the collection; a rank to which the poet is entitled by his merit.

Sannazarius was born at Naples, in the fifteenth century. His singular learning and amiable morals soon introduced him to the court, where, though he was caressed and advanced, he was not allured from polite letters by the temptations either of ambition or of pleasure. He made poetry the elegant employment of his liberal leisure; and amidst the business and dissipation of a court, produced his admired poem, *De Partu Virginis*.

This poem is said to have employed its elegant writer no less than twenty years in adding the last polish and improvement. He was one of those writers of exquisite taste, who can seldom satisfy their own ideas of excellence. Indeed, I believe, few fine writers please themselves; for they who reach one great height of excellence, see their horizon extended as they rise, and consider the ascent which they have already gained as an humble eminence, compared to summits which seem to ascend in perpetual progression, and to elude their most laborious endeavours. Apelles used to say, that Protagenes knew not when to take his hand from
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the tablet which he was painting, and the same has been said of this artist in a sister art.

Of this poem, though the admirers have been warm and numerous, there have been censurers, whose opinions seem to be just. The style is beautiful and Virgilian; but the spirit is not always equal to the style. Erasmus acknowledges that he read the poem with pleasure; but at the same time laments, that a sacred subject was not treated more consistently with our ideas of sanctity. Rapin allows, that the purity of the style is admirable; but asserts, that the fable of the piece is destitute of delicacy, and that the manner is by no means adequate to the dignity of the subject. It has also been thought a just cause of reprehension, that, in a sacred poem, he has never mentioned the names of Jesus or of Christ. He was afraid that such names might disgust an ear accustomed to the majestic sounds of the Latin language, and of Virgilian verse. When he is introducing the prophecies which foretold Jesus Christ, he is ashamed to use the names of Isaiah and David, but represents Proteus as singing them in a cave on the banks of the Jordan.

Sannazarius indeed affords an instance, among many others, how difficult it is to succeed in sacred poetry. The poem *De Partu Virginis*, like the *Christiad* of Vida, is, notwithstanding the beauties of diction, the worst production of its author. It is the business of poetry to raise things, from the low level of reality, to all the elevation which fancy and language can bestow; but divine subjects are already so far raised above nature, as not to admit of poetical exaltation. The attempt has always, except in a few instances, discovered only the impotence and ambition of man. It is like an attempt to put Ossa on Pelion, in order to invade the skies. A very judicious critic has shewn, in some of his prefaces to the English poets, that sacred poetry, when uninspired, can seldom reach exalted excellence.

The most popular of the poems of Sannazarius are his *Piscatory Eclogues*. Like Pope's pastorals, they were juvenile compositions; and, like them, they may be produced as proofs, that improvement does not al-

ways keep pace with progressive years. There is a happiness in native genius, which is sometimes lost, rather than improved, with increasing judgment and experience.

Piscatory eclogues have been attempted by several writers; but they have not been successful. It is indeed easy to conjecture why they have not succeeded. Pastoral poetry is so far removed from reality and nature, that there seems to be little relish remaining among mankind for new works of that species. But we all know, that the manners of those, who are engaged in fishing as a trade, are even coarser and more brutal than those of the modern shepherd. To put the elegant language of the Mantuan muse into the mouths of the crew of a fishing-smack, is such a violation of truth and nature, as tends to excite ridicule by its incongruity.

The charms, however, of fine language and melodious verse, can almost reconcile us to absurdity of design; and these charms are very conspicuous and captivating in the Eclogues of Sannazarius. Rapin has bestowed great praise upon them; and Scaliger asserts, that they are the only Latin poems, of this kind, which, after Virgil, are worth perusal. There is, indeed, a very considerable portion of that sweet Virgilian grace, which has been so happily characterised in the epithets *molle et facetum*, the tender and the highly-finished. It is one of the distinguishing excellencies of this poet, that he has used the file with great delicacy and attention.

The Elegies of Sannazarius are admired for their ease and harmony, and his Epigrams have also held a high place among the compositions of modern Latinists. It is not consistent with the design of my papers to introduce long citations in the learned languages; and therefore I must refer the classical reader to the poems themselves, which are frequently to be found in collections, if not in separate volumes.

I trust, however, I shall want no apology for inserting the following passage relative to Sannazarius, which I have accidentally fallen upon in a very fine writer and excellent critic of our own times.

"I can by no means," says the late philosopher of Salisbury, "omit Sannazarius, whose Eclogues in particular, formed on the plan of a fishing life instead of pastoral, cannot be enough admired both for their Latinity and their sentiment. His fourth eclogue, called Proteus, written in imitation of Virgil's Eclogue called Silenus, may be justly valued as a master-piece in its kind."

The critic quotes several verses of this piece, and points out peculiar beauties. In a subsequent page, he cites several most beautiful passages from other poems, descriptive of the villa of Sannazarius at Mergillina. "It would be difficult," he concludes, "to translate these elegant morsels. It is sufficient to express what they mean collectively—that the village of Mergillina had solitary woods; had groves of laurel and citron; had grottoes in the rock, with rivulets and springs; and that, from its lofty situation, it looked down upon the sea, and commanded an extensive prospect."

"It is no wonder that such a villa should enamour such an owner. So strong was his affection for it, that, when during the subsequent wars in Italy, it was demolished by the Imperial troops, this unfortunate event was supposed to have hastened his end."

He was buried near this delightful spot, the scene of his elegant enjoyments, and near the sweet poet of Mantua, the constant object of his successful imitation. An epitaph was engraved on his tomb, written by Bembo, and expressive of a wish, that flowers might arise from the sacred ashes; for that there reposed Sannazarius, next in place to Virgil, as next in genius.

I will venture to recommend this poet, and many others of the moderns, to the young or classical scholar; but, at the same time, it is necessary to add a caution: let original writers be first read; nor let others be attended to, till the taste is refined, and the judgment corroborated by the actual contemplation of the finished pieces of the Augustan age. Let Virgil be read almost to satiety, before the attention is diverted to the inferior moderns. Many a fine genius has been checked

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in its career by a too early perusal of writers, who, with all their elegance, are still subordinate, and who frequently are no more than imitators of imitators. When the taste and judgment are once rightly established, they may be finely exercised by sometimes contemplating copies as well as originals. Nor let any fear to sip at those fountains, from which several of our best English poets drank copiously.

NO. LXIV. ON THE VENERABLE BEDE, AND
SEVERAL OTHER EARLY WRITERS OF ENGLAND.

I Cannot help considering those writers, who arrived at distinguished eminence in a dark age, as the heroes of literature. In later times, and indeed at present, there are various and powerful incitements to literary ambition. A competent education is become general. Books are easily procured, readers abound, and reputation and gain are the usual effects of remarkable improvement. But to have written much and successfully in the seventh century, is a proof of uncommon ardour and undaunted perseverance, such as was not to be cooled by neglect, nor obstructed by difficulty. Books, which must always supply the materials for writing, were at that time difficult to be procured; and after they were collected, and the compositions to which they gave occasion completed, few were capable of reading them, or of bestowing on them that approbation which they justly deserved. It is, indeed, difficult to form an adequate idea of the strength and resolution, which, amidst all these discouragements, could confine a student of that period to the labour of writing, and enable him to succeed in it to the admiration of distant ages.

The venerable Bede stands forth a very illustrious example of piety and literary application. He was born about the middle of the seventh century, at Jarrow,

row, at the mouth of the Tyne, and was early devoted to a monastic life. He confined himself to his solitary cell; and, though he was invited to Italy by the pope, preferred the sweets of liberty, and of an unambitious life, which he spent in a regular alternation of prayers and study.

In the third volume of his history, he says of himself, "When I was seven years old, I was given up by my relations to the very respectable Abbot Benedict, and then to Ceolfriid, to be educated by them; and, passing my whole life in the same monastery, I employed myself intirely in meditating on the scriptures; and, amidst the observance of a strict discipline, and the daily business of chanting in the church, I constantly found, in the exercises of learning, of teaching, and of writing, a sweet amusement."

His great work was an Ecclesiastical History; but his miscellaneous productions are almost incredibly numerous. He is said to have been skilled in Greek as well as in Latin, and he distinguished himself by his knowledge in poetry, rhetoric, general history, astronomy, arithmetic, chronology, philosophy, and theology. So great was his character as a theologist, that his Homilies were appointed to be read in churches, even while he was alive, by the express order of the bishops. To this circumstance he probably owes the title of Venerable; for, as he was alive, he could not easily be made a saint, and therefore he was honoured with an intermediate but most respectable epithet; an epithet significant of the sanctity of his character, which was as strikingly marked by warmth and sincerity of devotion, as by extensive learning.

He has not affected elegance of style; but he is not altogether inelegant. He is perspicuous, if he is not pure; and concise and easy, if not full and harmonious. Though he is said to have drawn his learning from the Greek and Latin authors, yet he seems to have attended more to their matter than their manner. He is credulous, and relates the foolish stories of an uncultivated age, as if they were true history. He undoubtedly has some faults of his age, and has been severely censured

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for them by Du Pin, Dargonne, and Milton; but he has been extolled and admired by those, whose names, both in number and weight, will be more than equivalent to his censurers; and, take him for all in all, as Shakespeare says, he must be considered as one of the earliest, and, on that account, as well as his intrinsic merits, one of the most brilliant ornaments of English literature. His Ecclesiastical History, in five books, was published in the last century at Cambridge, with the Saxon paraphrase of Alfred the Great. His various other works, a catalogue of which would exceed the limits of my paper, are scattered throughout all the most ancient and valuable libraries in the kingdom. Considering the improvements which have been made in the space of a thousand years, they may not probably be very useful, but they are striking and curious examples of early learning and application, under great disadvantages.

Alcuin was the scholar of Bede, and reflects honour on his master. His learning was deep and extensive. He wrote not less than fifty treatises on important subjects, and in a style which, in his age, was not inelegant. He had the singular honour of introducing polite literature into France, whither he was invited by the king, by recommending the establishment of the university of Paris. He is said also to have founded a school at Tours, where he presided as the master, and refused to leave his employment and institution at the urgent invitation of the Emperor Charlemagne.

Joannes Scotus Erigena became a very distinguished scholar in the eighth century. He was most probably a native of Scotland, though England and Ireland have put in their claims to the honour of his birth. He wrote many treatises; but his principal work was his five books on the Division of Nature, printed in the last century at Oxford. He also, like Alcuin, was invited to France by Francis the Bald, with whom he lived on terms of intimate friendship, and even familiarity. Some of his writings were thought rather injurious to the Roman catholic religion; and, at the instigation of the pope, he was driven from Paris to his native country. On his return, he was assassinated by the monks

monks of Malmſbury, who ſtabbed him with penknives, in revenge for the freedom with which he had ventured to reprehend them. Bale relates a circumſtance, which tends to render this old author remarkable. He tells us, that he was the firſt profeſſor in Oxford, and was appointed to his office by Alfreð himſelf, immediately after that great king had begun the eſtabliſhment of his noble univerſity.

But I mean not to invade the province of the biographer, nor to engage in literary hiſtory, beyond the limits which are uſually aſſigned to my papers. I have entered on this ſubject with a view to amuſe the young ſtudent, and to rouse his diligence by examples of uncommon application and ſucceſs, under circumſtances the moſt unfavourable. I ſhall perhaps occaſionally reſume it. I have always taken a particular pleaſure in reading anecdotes of the learned; and I cannot help thinking it a pleaſure neceſſarily connected with improvement; for we can ſcarcely read the accounts of them tranſmitted to us by critics and biographers, without admiring the many inſtances of virtue and learning which occur, and we inſenſibly learn to imitate what we habitually admire. As in the arts of painting and ſculpture, the beſt method of facilitating the progreſs of the artiſt is to place the fineſt models conſtantly in his view; ſo alſo in life and in letters it is, of the higheſt importance to point out patterns of that actual excellence, which, in our precepts and exhortations we have previously recommended.—There is no method ſo ſucceſsful of displaying the blemiſhes to be avoided, and the beauties to be purſued.

No. LXV. ON SOME OF THE MOST CELEBRATED SCHOOLMEN.

EVERY lover of letters will find himself impelled, by curiosity, to enquire into the lives and writings of those scholars, who, in any period of literature, have arrived at distinguished reputation. Few have been viewed with greater admiration by the age in which they flourished, than the professors of scholastic theology. Scarcely any epithet which language afforded was thought adequate to their exalted merit.

Thomas d'Aquin, or, as he is commonly called, Thomas Aquinas, the angelic Doctor, was born in Naples, in the beginning of the thirteenth century. He was early devoted to philosophy and theology, and one of his masters is said to have been a countryman of our own, Alexander ab Ales, the father of the schoolmen, and a *doctor irrefragabilis*. After a virtuous and laborious life, spent in an unremitted attention to learning, he died at the age of fifty. He was canonized in 1323, and has been read and admired for ages among a species of congenial scholars, who, in a very peculiar and unfashionable kind of learning, have displayed an astonishing depth and acuteness of intellect. He founded the sect of the Thomists.

Thomas Aquinas stands without a rival at the head of the scholastic theologians. He is called by the Roman catholics the Homer of their theological writers; and, as a philosopher, he acquired uncommon glory by his Comments on Aristotle, whose works held a place in the esteem of the times at least equal to the Bible. "Nor was he," says Erasmus, "great only in his own age. He exhibited a constancy of application, a soundness of understanding, and a solidity of erudition, which scarcely any of the modern divines have equalled. He has made so excellent an use of the learning then in vogue, that one cannot help lamenting, that he

" enjoyed

“ enjoyed not the advantages of the learned languages, “ and the other materials of politer literature.” Had Aquinas been born two centuries later, there is scarcely any work which we might not have expected, in polite and solid literature, from such activity, combined with such penetration.

His works, together with his life, and the notes of the editors, make up no less than eighteen volumes in folio, and they were printed in 1594, at Venice.

Thomas Aquinas has been introduced to the observation of the English reader by an anecdote in the life of Young, in which it is recorded, that, when Young applied to Pope for advice in the choice of books on first entering on the study of divinity, Pope recommended Thomas Aquinas. This is generally understood to have been no more than a joke; but, if Pope had been a zealous catholic, it might have been probable, that he took this artful method of making a convert to popery. The simplicity and enthusiasm of Young might have rendered him an easy dupe to jesuitical zeal and artifice. But, I believe, Pope was too much attached to poetry to be a bigot to any system of religion.

It appears from a passage in the works of Young, that he read enough of Aquinas, and of similar writers, to have formed a very exalted idea of their merit. For, says he, “ the minds of the schoolmen were almost as “ much cloistered as their bodies; they had but little “ learning and few books; yet may the most learned “ be struck with some astonishment at their so singular “ natural sagacity, and most exquisite edge of thought. “ Who could expect to find Pindar and Scotus, Shake- “ speare and Aquinas, of the same party? Both equally “ shew an original, unindebted energy; the *vigor igneus*, “ and *caelestis origo* burn in both, and leave us in doubt, “ whether genius is more evident in the sublime flights “ and beauteous flowers of poetry, or in the profound “ penetration, and marvellous, keen, and minute dis- “ tinctions, called the thorns of the schools.”

It is said that the great logician, Bishop Saunderson, was particularly fond of the *Secunda Secundæ* of Aquinas, and that he used constantly to carry with him this treatise, together with Aristotle's Rhetoric and Tully's

Offices.

Offices. A book so much read and esteemed by so great a man, and associated with the works of Cicero and Aristotle, must have no inconsiderable merit.

Joannes Duns, who derived his *cognomen*, or additional name of Scotus, from his native country, was not much posterior to Aquinas in time or in glory. He was the scholar of William Varro, an Englishman. The epithet of *subtile* was allotted to him, according to the fashion of the times. The subtilty of his genius gave him, indeed, an incontrovertible claim to the title. Nothing, it is said of him, was so dark, but he was able to enlighten it; nothing so enigmatic, but, like another *Ædipus*, he was able to resolve it. But, alas! he carried his subtilty too far. The thread was spun so fine, that it became at last invisible. Many terms were used by him, as they were indeed by all the schoolmen, which, if they conveyed any idea to himself, are yet too recondite to enlighten his less subtle readers. Who is able to explain his *hæcceities*, his intrinsic modes, and his insolubles? And yet these are terms used to explain other books, and particularly the scriptures. Our countryman, John Bale, severely censures such theology. He calls this jargon of terms the chimeras of the sophists, and justly observes, that the Roman catholic religion, dressed out in these forms, appears more foolish than the fabulous theology of *Hæsiotus* and *Orpheus*.

"Joannes Duns Scotus," says his panegyrist *Lanfrancus*,
"was learned to a miracle in logic, and in the thorny
"paths of divinity. He founded the sect of the Scotists,
"which was opposed to the Thomists. He was greater
"than Homer in one respect, since not only cities, but
"kingdoms, contended for the honour of his birth.
"The English, the Irish, the Scotch, the French, and
"the Italians, have claimed him as their own."

He was, however, unfortunate in his end; for being seized with an apoplexy, and supposed to be dead, he was buried too soon; and, reviving in the vault, called in vain for assistance, and died before he could be released.

The learning of the modern ages is very different from the learning of poor Duns, and no kingdom will

now

now contend with Scotland for the honour of producing this subtle doctor. His diligence and sagacity are, however, truly admirable. His works consist of twelve volumes in folio, which were published in the last century at Lyons. Though none indeed will now read them, yet they ought to be preserved as very curious monuments of a peculiar learning and genius, and of indefatigable industry.

Remond Lulle, or, as he is called in Latin, Raymondus Lullus, flourished about the year 1300, nearly at the same time with Duns Scotus. He was born in Majorca, and has long been the boast of the Spaniards. His pretensions and reputation were very high, and he became distinguished by the title of *Doctor illuminatus*.

He is said to have spent his youth in profligacy, and not to have been reformed till the age of forty; but he then engaged in the conversion of the Saracens, and, after having suffered much ill treatment, was at last stoned to death. He was therefore, of course, worshipped by the people of Arragon as a martyr. He was probably soon deposed from this elevation; for there arose a party, who maintained that he had been instructed in all he knew by that scientific preceptor, the devil.

From his intercourse with the Arabians, he acquired a knowledge of medicine, natural philosophy, and astronomy. From all these combined, he deduced a science of his own, as he represented it in Spain and Italy, that of chemistry and alchemy. An old writer, Robertus Constantinus, asserts that he had seen, in the Tower of London, a piece of pure gold made by the alchemical art of Raymondus Lullus.

He is said to have written more than four thousand treatises in philosophy, medicine, and theology. He founded a sect of Lullists, and was the inventor of a certain *method*, which our great Lord Bacon reprobates as useless and ostentatious. It tended to teach the terms of art only, as if he who knows the words were sure to comprehend the art itself. Rapin also censures it as a *method* which has no solidity, and which, so far from making men learned, does not even suppose them reasonable.

He gave his logical work the pompous title of the Great Art; and he engaged that, by its assistance, any man, however ignorant, should acquire the whole circle of the sciences in three months. This work was to be accomplished by means of various diagrams, circular and triangular, and by the letters of the alphabet mysteriously transposed. He had, however, his admirers and followers; but his great art has been found of so little use to mankind, that the mode of its operation is almost unknown. They who are curious and idle, may find some account of it in Gassendus, Alstedius, and Keckermannus; but I advise them to spend their leisure better than in the research.

Lullus is not indeed esteemed for any real improvement in knowledge or sound learning. He threw a veil of obscurity over his writings, which has often served as a cloak of ignorance. It is not surprising, that an alchemist should affect the darkness and enigmatic air of a magician. In an age of profound ignorance, the less he was understood, the more he was admired.

Considering the disadvantages under which they laboured, and the multitude and profundity of their works, many of these celebrated scholars exhibit very stupendous and animating examples of human industry. I have, indeed, collected these few observations on them, with a view to encourage the young student to diligence, by suggesting to him what great works the human intellect is capable of performing in the short period of a life; and at the same time, to deter him from wasting the force of his genius in subjects uselessly abstruse, or in any modes of exertion, which are not likely to become long and extensively advantageous to mankind.

No. LXVI. ON THE VALUE OF AN HONEST
MAN.

IT is the folly and misfortune of human nature to prefer the present to the future, the agreeable to the useful, the shining to the solid. We admire wit, beauty, wealth, titles, and all that sparkles with the brilliancy of external lustre; and through we probably approve the plain and homely virtues, which form the foundation of all real excellence, it is with the cold feelings of unimpassioned judgment. But in youth, when our choice in life is usually fixed, we are much more disposed to pursue what we admire, than what we only approve; and the consequence is, that the greater number form the earliest and most durable attachments to vanity. Sober maxims, rules of prudence, dictates of justice, plain truth, simplicity of manners, constancy in friendship, and regularity in business, appear with few charms in the eyes of him, who pants for the noble distinctions of being remarked at public places for elegance of dress, admired for the most splendid vis-à-vis, celebrated for his wit at a masquerade, smiled upon at court, and at length perhaps rewarded with a title, a ribband, and a star. To obtain such bliss, far other qualifications are necessary than the antiquated virtues of one's grandfather. The business must be done by dress, address, and, in short the graces, the graces, the graces! With respect to honesty, I have somewhere read, that a man of honour, on hearing honesty attributed to his fashionable friend, expressed some degree of displeasure at the panegyric, and declared, that such a compliment was only fit for his footman. Our first question concerning a man, whose character we wish to learn, is seldom, is he honest? but, is he rich, is he able, is he a man of fashion?

Now there have been of late, and indeed at all times, many men of fashion totally destitute of moral honesty. They have possessed every personal grace, and every pleasing

pleasing accomplishment. They could sing, dance, and play on musical instruments. They could converse with the grave and the gay, and adapt all their sentiments to the present company. They had that freedom which is called charming, and which enabled them to push themselves into all companies, and accost men of rank and character by their surnames, and without any respectful addition. All this could not fail to excite the praise of the ladies, and the envy of the gentlemen. But in the end it has been found, that these charming men, with the appearance of whatever is good and agreeable, have been the first to overreach in a bargain, exceedingly successful in the profession of swindling, and particularly adroit at a forgery.

So despicable and detestable do the characters of such men appear on detection, that I cannot help thinking honesty is the best ornament, as well as the best policy. It is indeed a diamond of the first water, while all the shewy, dazzling, unsubstantial qualities, which the artful assume for the purposes of deceit, are no more than French paste or paltry glass, at once both taudry and brittle.

I would recommend unfeigned honesty as ornamental; because, such is the nature of the human heart, it is infinitely more likely to be pursued and valued by the majority of mankind, when they think it will conciliate the love and admiration of each other, than when they view it merely as a moral excellence. The man of reading, reflection, and cultivated mind, will want no motives to pursue it, but those which are suggested by his own conscience and the delicacy of his sentiments. But to the mass of mankind, composed of all ages, all ranks, all tempers, all professions, all parties, and all religions, it is necessary to render any particular virtue, which the moralist wishes to promote, both lovely and honourable. Interest, passion, and fancy, must be taught if possible, to second the decisions of reason. She is too often deposed by her refractory subjects, whose obedience indeed is seldom to be relied on, but when it is in some degree spontaneous.

It cannot surely be denied, that the quality which pervades every part of human life and tends immediately

ately to render it secure, comfortable, and honourable, is itself one of the most honourable which can be possessed by a human creature; and such is that uncelebrated virtue, common and moral honesty. Without it, society is a den of thieves, and men are to each other wolves and foxes.

Every day's experience evinces the justness of that representation in the scriptures, in which it is said, that the heart is deceitful above all things, who can know it? In the most trifling intercourse, where neither pleasure nor profit are in view, the propensity to deceit appears in the little promises, professions, compliments, which are mutually made, usually without any sincerity of regard, and often with real and inveterate aversion. But where interest is in view, the machinations made use of for the accomplishment of the mean and mercenary purpose, are often such as might characterise an infernal agent. Plausibility is, at the same time, worn as a cloak; and he who has a design on your purse, your life, or your country, will assume all the appearances of cordial friendship and unpolluted honour. I believe it is well known, that the graces, the agreeable qualities, as they are called, and the appearance of the most amiable virtues, were possessed in perfection by a Perreau, a Dodd, a Donnellan, and a Delamotte.

Indeed, this common honesty, as it is named, is far less common than our pride is willing to suppose. But if it could be introduced into all the employments of life, the golden age would be restored. I will imagine the event as already accomplished, and will please myself for a moment with the visionary prospect of the happy consequences. I see the brightness diffusing itself through all the regions of society, from the loftiest mountain to the lowest vale; or, to speak in a figure without figure, the happy consequences are equally visible from the prince to the peasant.

The nobles of the land, instead of making use of their advantages and influence for the purpose of private and family emolument, or for the indulgence of their selfish and sensual passions, devote themselves to the service of the community, defend its liberty, pro-

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serve and amend its laws, give countenance to its religion, patronize learning, and encourage all the inventions of ingenuity, which can contribute to the ornament or accommodation of human life. Of how few among the nobility of Europe, and even of our own country, can all this be predicated with any regard to veracity? But is it not dishonest to enjoy the advantages of wealth and rank, to which, by the law of nature, and perhaps by their own merit, they have no more right than their footmen behind their chairs, without making any return to the community, by whose laws they possess their political elevation? When they traffic for boroughs, sell their own suffrages in the senate, spend their days at gaming-tables, cockpits, horse-races, stables, and dog-kennels, they may indeed be men of honour, as honour is now understood, but I am sure they are not honest men.

If the plain principles of common honesty possessed a real efficacy on the conduct of life, we should no longer see men of independent fortunes meanly devoting their lives to no other purpose but to encrease that which is already too large for their merits, by dealing in life-annuities, mortgages, engaging in banking-houses, toiling in the Alley, raising rents, or spending what they have happened to inherit, in vanity, lust, intemperance, and ostentation. They would see the justice of making some return to the society in which they live, for the exemption they enjoy from labour and necessity. They would dedicate their time and attention to benevolence, beneficence, to setting good examples, and removing all evil, as far as their influence extends. It is not enough that they are merely harmless; for with certain advantages, and in certain situations, to be only negatively good is to be positively bad.

If honesty were duly regarded in the professions, we should not be over-run with bold pretenders, who make their way in the world by dint of effrontery, and deceive all who trust in their pretensions. We should see the clergy more anxious in the business of instructing and reforming their parishes, than in collecting the tythes; fond of residing among their simple rustics, instead of visiting them only once a year for that money,

ney, which is to be spent at watering-places, theatres, balls, and assemblies. We should not hear ignorant preachers deceiving the vulgar by noise and nonsense, and pretending to superior sanctity and illumination. We should oftener see that dignified character, a worthy parish priest, performing his duties with conscientious regularity, and diffusing comfort all around him.

In the medical walk we should have no quacks. The physician would be more attentive to the patient whom he sees stretched on the bed of death or disease, than he is to the fee. Medicines would be unadulterated; the poor treated as tenderly as the rich; ignorant apothecaries would not procure diplomas from Edinburgh, and put themselves off, among the inconsiderate crowd, for regular physicians, adorned by the honours of approving universities which they never saw. Such a deceit upon mankind deserves severe reprehension; and, indeed, the assuming of doctor's degrees, without any just title, tends both to mislead the world, and to vilify those proper honours of real merit; and it ought to be immediately checked either by law or by ridicule.

In law there is scarcely any department which would not undergo a most valuable reformation, if we could once gain the important point of rendering honesty more lovely in the eyes of its professors than lucre. The glorious institutions of consenting senates would then be uniformly a blessing to mankind, as they were designed, and would never be converted to engines of oppression in the hands of an artful counsellor, or a harpy pettifogger.

In the army, no one would receive his country's wages, who would not fight on every proper occasion.

In trade, we should see no circumvention, no advantage taken of the wants and distresses of others, no deceiving of the simple and unsuspecting, no vending of bad commodities as the best, no forgeries, no swindling, and few bankruptcies. Justice would hold the scales, and the trader's profits would receive an addition of more than a hundred *per cent.* in the advantage of a good name and a good conscience.

In literature, for here also the deceitfulness of the heart of man is often conspicuous, there would be no partial

partial judgments, no puffery, no plagiarism, no apologies for vice, irreligion, or tyranny, no catchpenny compilations; evils which spring from the perversion of literature, from knavery and from avarice, and at once disgrace both learning and human nature. Among the lackies of literature, as some of its subordinate professors and managers of it have been justly called, such villanies, rogueries, and sharpening tricks are practised, as might disgrace the mercantile Jews of Duke's-Place. But in the condition of things which I have supposed, all would be fair and beautiful in the walks of learning, as in the ancient Lyceum or Portico.

Happy state! but, alas, it is imaginary! It might, however, I am convinced, in some degree, be realized, if due care were taken in education, to render the least tendency to deceit disgraceful, and obnoxious to punishment; and every ingenuous, open, honest action honourable; for Honour is the nurse of the Virtues as well as of the Arts. Instead of which, the writings of some modern instructors tend immediately to recommend every species of deceit at that early age, when a little evil sown in the bosom by the tutor, cannot fail to take root, and grow to a stupendous magnitude.

Early and late, by night and by day, in season and out of season, as the scripture strongly expresses it, I would inculcate on the breast of boys the just remark of the moral poet, that an honest man is the noblest work of God.

No. LXVII. REFLECTIONS ON THE ORIGIN
AND EFFECTS OF SCULPTURE, WITH MIS-
CELLANEOUS REMARKS ON IT.

THAT the human mind is naturally delighted with the works of imitation, is a remark of the earliest philosophers; and the justness of it has been uniformly confirmed by every subsequent enquiry. Even those objects, which in the reality disgust the senses, when they are imitated by the skilful artist, please the imagination: but if imitation is capable of con-

verting deformity to beauty, and of teaching inelegance to please, its influence must be much greater, when the object imitated originally excites ideas of the sublime and beautiful.

Just representations of the irrational or inanimate creation, are, indeed, in a great degree pleasing; but the highest delight which the fine arts can bestow, is derived from imitations of human nature. The variegated landscape is, perhaps, viewed with greater complacency on the canvas, than in the natural appearance; because imitation adds a grace to the intrinsic beauty. The bloom of the grape, the blush of the peach, and the crimson of the rose, designed by nature to please, may perhaps please yet more when artificially presented to the view by her hand-maiden. The same observation may justly be extended to the imitation of animals, and the placid scenery of still life. All these are found to please the imagination, but not to elevate the mind. They inspire a complacency, but do not warm with sentiment, or animate to virtue. To touch the heart with sympathy, to excite the nobler affections, and to give a masculine pleasure, man must be the object of imitation. That general connection which subsists between all who partake of humanity, causes a general concern in the interests of each individual. Man, indeed, views the actions and passions of men with all the solicitude of one concerned in the event, but looks down upon the lower parts of the creation with the dispassionate curiosity of a disinterested spectator.

To represent the attitudes of his actions, and the features of his passions, is the principal business of *Sculpture*; and though a considerable degree of its excellence depends on the delicacy of manual execution, yet has it ever maintained a distinguished place among the arts which require a fine imagination. Nature, indeed, lies open to the inspection of the learned and of the unlearned, of the stupid and of the ingenious; but the man of fine feeling, and of elegant taste, can alone perceive and imitate her more delicate traits, her more captivating, though less obvious, allurements.

The first productions of this art probably owe their origin to religion. Too gross to conceive immaterial ideas of the Deity, the vulgar wanted some sensible object to fix their attention, and excite their enthusiasm. Thus he, whose temple is all space, and whose altar the universe, was confined in his residence to some rude image, shapen by the hand of idolatry: but however derogatory from the dignity of the Supreme Being, or inconsistent with the reason of man, the practice has been peculiarly favourable to the arts of imitation. The statue that was formed as an object of religious adoration, has, indeed, failed in its original purpose; but it has been viewed with a degree of wonder little less than worship.

And, indeed, it is to be presumed, that few will wish that idolatrous attention, which is at present paid to the statues of the ancient deities, forbidden: for whenever they shall cease to be admired, they will cease to be imitated. Such an event every friend to just taste will deprecate, since to renounce the models of the antients, is to renounce the most captivating embellishment of art, an adherence to simplicity and nature. While a *Venus de Medicis*, and an *Apollo Belvidere*, shall continue to be standards of excellence, no one can with reason apprehend, lest the chaste graces of real elegance should be sacrificed to the false glare of Gothic affectation.

To do justice to the remains of antiquity by description, requires a pen as masterly as the artist's chisel. A Virgil should exhibit the ideas of a Praxiteles. A professor of the art may, perhaps, find technical terms adequate to a technical description. He may expatiate on proportion, and dictate rules for forming a judgment; but the language of an artist can seldom be completely understood but by artists.

Comparisons are frequently made between the respective beauty, the value, and the utility, of the several arts. One of the best judges of antiquity has asserted, in a well-known passage of his works, that all the arts which tend to polish and refine human nature, are united by a common bond. That painting, poetry, and sculpture, nearly approximate to each other, is

obvious on the slightest review. They have constantly reflected images on each other, and joining like the Graces, hand in hand, have, from the union of their force, commanded in all ages universal admiration. If the Mantuan Muse drew her most beautiful pictures from the originals of Sculpture, to the Muse of Homer, on the other hand, has Sculpture been indebted for her master-piece. The sublime idea of a Being, who shook the heavens with his nod, existed originally in the poet's mind. The artist, however, embodied the ideal form, and may be said to have wanted only Promethean aid to have realized the creature of imagination. The marble form has been transferred to canvas, and the representation of the tablet to the marble, with equal applause both to the arts and to the professors: and though some have essayed to ascertain the superiority of one or other of these sister arts, yet as it is invidious to give a distinguishing preference to either, when each endeavours to exalt the other, it may be more candid to assert with Horace, on a similar occasion, that they equally require and communicate mutual assistance, with all the benignity of disinterested friendship.

Sculpture is not, any more than the other arts, confined to imitations of the human form. Subordinate to statuary, are many other operations of the chisel, which require both ingenuity of design, and skill of execution. The marble urn, and the sepulchral monument, have ever been the chief ornaments of mansions dedicated to the Deity. The palaces of princes have derived less splendour from the profusion of finery, and the glittering of magnificence, than from the foliage of the Corinthian capital, and the elegant wreaths of the festoon: and though the modern invention of multiplying the works of the artist, by devices which require no ingenuity, has prostituted the ornaments of a temple to the gaudiness of a suburban villa, and the decoration of a palace to the embellishment of a tradesman's door-post; yet must not he, whose hand formed the original vase, or sculptured the storied urn, lose that praise which is ever due to the inventive artist.

It belongs to sculpture, as well as to painting, not only to represent single figures, but to combine them in a group. The relievo is a marble picture; though it wants those graces of the canvas, which result from a due mixture of light and shade, and from a variety of colours, yet it possesses some advantages which may ultimately compensate the defect. Exposure to the weather, the commonest accidents, and the insensible depredations of time, soon destroy the comparatively transient productions of the pencil; but the marble tablet defies the corroding tooth of ages, and may survive even a deluge or a conflagration. There remains not a single painting of Parrhasius or Apelles, of Timanthes or Protagoras, by which we can judge of the justice of those praises so lavishly bestowed on them by Pliny, Quintilian and Lucian; but many antient relievos continue to the present day, in all their original perfection.

Sculpture displays peculiar grace and excellence, when it condescends to work in miniature. The gem, however precious and beautiful, receives additional value, and more attractive beauty, from the hand of the artist. The features of the hero and philosopher when marked on the stone, whose cohesion is like that of adamant, are transmitted to the latest ages, unhurt by accidents, and unimpaired by time. Thus is the votary of learning enabled to behold the countenances of those whose achievements astonish, whose writings charm, and whose precepts improve him; and after the lapse of some thousand years, to indulge the natural desire of viewing the real aspect of men who shone in the field, and in the cabinet, or who dignified the portico or the academy. When all other sources of information have failed, the figure on the gem has often illustrated beauties, and cleared obscurities in the classics and the historians. Of these smaller productions of the sculptor, the ingenuity of modern invention, stimulated by the hopes of gain, has found means to multiply copies without number; but though the copies should lessen the pecuniary value, they cannot diminish the intrinsic merit of the originals.

That species of sculpture, which is distinguished by the specific appellation of *Engraving on Copper*, was totally unknown to the antients. By the co-operation of this sister art, the productions of painting are universally diffused, and the ornament reserved in the gallery of an individual, becomes the embellishment of every habitation. However great its uses, and exalted its perfection, it must be confessed, by every impartial observer, to owe a great degree of its advancement to the artists of our own country; and it were easy to enumerate some works of English engravers, of which the justness of representation, and the delicacy of execution, have not been surpassed by any age or any nation.

NO. LXVIII. THAT THE ENGLISH POSSESS
A FINE TASTE FOR SCULPTURE, AND THAT
IT OUGHT TO BE ENCOURAGED FOR ITS
MORAL EFFECTS.

THERE are some, who, with a spirit too confined for the liberality of philosophy, have excluded from all pretensions to refined taste, that part of mankind which nature has placed in the northern regions. This faculty has been limited to those happier mortals, who inhale the balmy breezes of the warmer climates. That these arts have been most successfully cultivated in the warmer countries of Europe, cannot be denied; but let it not be said, that any of the faculties of the free-born mind are local. Nor let it be hastily concluded, that the English, who are classed by these philosophers among the northern savages, but who are known to possess the mental powers in a state of vigour equal at least to the rest of the world, are destitute of taste, of that faculty which adds a grace to the exertions of all others, and without which the strongest efforts of the mind have an appearance of illiberality. If it was late before our artists made any
considerable

considerable proficiency in Sculpture, it must not be immediately inferred, that they were incapable of excellence: but that, as is incontestibly true, they did not attempt it. To expect that the art should attain perfection before it is an object of national attention, is no less unreasonable, than to require the fruit in maturity before the plantation of the tree.

The sun-shine of royal or popular patronage can baffle the rigours of the climate, and raise luxuriant vegetation on the bleakest mountain. Rewarded by a prince, and encouraged by a people, it is not to be wondered, that Sculpture has among us made rapid advances to attainable perfection. It were, indeed, easy to enumerate names which would do honour to the schools of Greece, and of antient and modern Italy; but to praise living merit, is frequently to excite envy without conferring fame. The ungenerous artist then must be content to appeal to posterity for unalloyed applause; and, when the tongue of Envy shall be wearied with detraction, merited praise will find a willing audience. There are sculptors among us of the present day, whose fame will be as durable as the marble which they shape, and who, while they carve the block, may promise themselves, like Thucydides, an everlasting possession.

Those arts, however, after all that has been said in their praise, which tend to flatter the imagination without amending the heart, and the utility of which appears to consist in their administration to pleasure, will, perhaps, be judged unworthy a serious attention by the rigid votaries of severe virtue. Too wise to be captivated with pleasure, they seek only for improvement. The pill that contributes to health, they can swallow without requiring it to be covered with gold, or sweetened with honey; but to condemn the productions of the chisel as merely instrumental to delight, is to assume that as a concession which can never be granted. In truth, the imitative arts are capable of conveying moral instruction in the most effectual manner, as their operation is instantaneous. They require not the deductions of logic, which can only be made by cultivated intellects; but by appealing to the senses, which are sometimes combined in great perfection with

the rudest minds, they strike immediately and irresistibly on the susceptible heart. The master's hand can give to matter the features of the soul, and impress on the rude block those thoughts and passions, which naturally excite congenial sentiments and sympathetic emotions; and the mind, which, perhaps, could never be sensible of the beauty of virtue from the reasonings of a Plato, or a Socrates, may be captivated with her amiable form when displayed by a Phidias or Praxiteles.

No man of sensibility can walk in the repositories of the illustrious dead, where the forms that moulder beneath his feet are represented in marble on the walls, without feeling, as he treads the solemn aisle, the most virtuous sensations. His faculties seem to stretch, and his virtues to expand, in efforts to reach the level of such exalted society. He catches the contagion of virtue by intuition, he forms heroic resolutions of emulating the excellence he admires, and, perhaps, ventures to entertain a secret hope, that he may one day fill a niche in the venerable circle of departed worthies. The descendant blushes to degenerate from his ancestors, who seem to view him from the sacred walls, and would upbraid him with his baseness. He feels himself stimulated to equal, if not to surpass, their glories.

Sculpture has, likewise, another no less efficacious, though more indirect, influence on the morals. It has, in common with all the fine arts, a powerful effect in softening the temper and humanizing the manners, an effect which will, perhaps, be felt and acknowledged by none but men of delicate taste and elegant attainments. The votaries of gain, of luxury, or of gross pleasure, have lost, by the grossness of their enjoyments, that nice susceptibility of impressions, that tenderness of feeling, which can alone perceive, with full force, the pleasures of imagination. The vulgar eye gazes with equal satisfaction on the canvas of a Titian, and the daubings of a sign-post, and discovers no more ingenuity in the works of the statuary, than in the rude image of the mere mechanic: but they whose natural feelings have been properly improved by culture, nor have yet become callous by attrition with the world,
know,

know, from experience, how the heart is mollified, the manners polished, and the temper sweetened, by a well-directed study of the arts of imitation. A fine sensibility of artificial excellence insensibly extends itself to the perception of natural and moral beauty; and the student returns from the artists gallery to his station in society, with a breast more disposed to feel and to reverberate the endearments of social life, and of reciprocal benevolence.

Sculpture claims, indeed, the power of exciting virtue, and the privilege of rewarding it. Many of the great benefactors to mankind have been animated in danger, and supported in fatigue, by the enlivening hope of enjoying a future existence in the memory of posterity. Satisfied with this recompence in reversion, heroes, patriots, and philosophers, have neglected the calls of interest, and the allurements of pleasure, to advance the happiness of society, and to adorn humanity. The sweet solace of their pain, the compensation of their labours, for which the heart has often panted, and every faculty has toiled, may be ultimately conferred by the hand of the statuary. Let not, therefore, the art be prostituted to perpetuate insignificance or vice, and to gratify the vanity of undeserving opulence, which possesses the power of rewarding virtue, and of bestowing immortality on perishable excellence.

No. LXIX. ON THE PROPRIETY OF EXTENDING CLASSICAL STUDIES TO NATURAL AND EXPERIMENTAL PHILOSOPHY, AND UNITING PHILOLOGY WITH SCIENCE.

STUDENTS who have been most attached to classical literature, and who consequently have succeeded best in it, have often been grossly ignorant of those pleasing parts of science, the laws and operations of nature.

Were it only for the sake of variety, and the pleasure resulting from it, I would beg leave to suggest to classical scholars the propriety of extending the objects of their pursuit. Poetry, history, moral philosophy, and philology, though truly delightful of themselves, will become more so, when the sameness of the ideas which they represent, is relieved by the beautiful and diversified scenes of natural philosophy. It is like going into a beautiful country which we never saw before, or like the arrival of a new season of the year, when we make an excursion from classical ground, on which we have long dwelt, into the territories of natural science. An assemblage of ideas entirely new is presented to the mind of him, who never before deviated from the flowery paths of philology. His understanding is refreshed with variety, and enriched with new acquisitions, and he returns to criticism, history, poetry, and whatever else constitutes polite letters, with a more eager appetite.

A knowledge of nature and of arts, as well as sciences, supplies a copious source of new ideas to the writer. Moral maxims and historical examples can scarcely fail, after letters have been long cultivated, to lose the grace and attraction of novelty. But from natural philosophy, new allusions, new exemplifications, new similitudes, new comparisons, and new images of all kinds, are easily deduced. What is borrowed from this department cannot have been anticipated by the ancients, since how little did they know of electricity, magnetism, hydrostatics, optics, pneumatics, and a thousand other most entertaining subjects, in which philosophy appears subservient to manufactures and the accommodation of common life! A man may have read the best Greek and Latin classics, and scarcely have one just idea of the orb on which he lives, or of its natural and artificial productions.

I wish, indeed, that classical taste may always be united with a competent knowledge of the sciences. I am convinced it would be for the advantage of both. For if it is true, on the one hand, that classical scholars have been often most disgracefully ignorant of things,

things, it is also true, on the other, that natural philosophers have often been unable to give their discoveries that pleasing dress which classical taste alone can bestow, and which is necessary to allure the general attention. By a reciprocal participation of each other's knowledge, the classic would become more solid, and the naturalist more pleasing. At the same time, it must be confessed, that solid science ought not to be superfluously decorated, nor delivered in the style of an affected rhetoric. Besides that, a profusion of misplaced ornaments is always unpleasing; tropes, figures, and unnecessary epithets, would introduce an obscurity most unfavourable to the progress of science. The Attic style seems, indeed, peculiarly suited to scientific productions; and, if Aristotle is too little ornamented, yet his chastity, correctness, and purity seldom fail to please on a diligent perusal. Pliny the Elder is, however, a more agreeable model of style, though his selection of matter is extremely culpable.

We have, indeed, many writers in natural philosophy who were trained in classical schools, and who were early polished by the elegancies of philological literature. But in their subsequent studies they seem to have relinquished the models of the golden ages, and to have written with little solicitude to please by their style, provided they were able to communicate information. The consequence has been, that many fine discoveries of original philosophers have either passed unnoticed by the common reader, or they have been represented in a style of languid and flowery description by writers, whose knowledge of nature was too superficial to enable them to communicate it with accuracy.

But, in truth, it must be allowed, that classical scholars have been much oftener ignorant of physiological learning, than natural philosophers of polite letters. Many of our very eminent poets, when they have occasionally introduced descriptions of the animal, vegetable, or fossil productions of nature, have committed egregious mistakes. To the honour of the poet of the Seasons, it has been remarked, that he was an accurate

curate observer of those appearances which he delighted to describe.

But, without insisting on the utility of physiological science, as preparatory to composition, one may ask, who is there that pretends to the character of the general scholar, or the man of a comprehensive mind, that would chuse to live his days, without seeing the new world, which is opened to his view by the microscope, the telescope, and all the curious machines of the experimentalist? What student would neglect to look into the entertaining volumes of a Ray, a Derham, an Adams, a Baker, a Swammerdam, a Keil, a Rowning, a Hales, a Cotes, a Clare, a Halley, a Boerhaave, a Linné, a Buffon, a Ferguson, or a Pennant? To shut our eyes on such glorious scenes as they exhibit is, as Milton calls it, an injury and fullness against nature. In this age and country, lectures in experimental philosophy are read in every part of the kingdom, and the student has an opportunity of acquainting himself with the most curious natural phenomena at a very trifling expence, and without the trouble of furnishing and managing a costly and complicated apparatus; an inestimable advantage, and such an one as the philosophers of antiquity would have traversed the world to enjoy. I have been astonished to see how very careless, in this respect, even men of sense and liberal education are found, and how few comparatively attend the lectures of the experimentalist. Even in the university of Oxford, I can remember, it was by no means universal to attend the professors, who read most ingenious lectures on astronomy, chemistry, and natural philosophy. The classical scholars seemed rather to despise that kind of learning; and, indeed, we usually undervalue what we do not understand.

I have frequently been surprised to find how few, in comparison, visit that noble repository of nature's productions, the British Museum. Many thousands, and those too in the more enlightened ranks, have lived and died within a mile or two of it, without having once had the curiosity to inspect it. Ye shades of Pliny and Aristotle, how indignant must ye have been, if ye

ye observed a people, pretending a love of science, yet regardless of such invaluable treasures, even at their thresholds!

That the vulgar and illiterate should be incurious is not surprising; but that the classical scholar should be totally ignorant of nature's works, is no less astonishing than disgraceful. To those who are induced, by their knowledge of a few languages, and of the classics, to think themselves completely accomplished in all human learning, I will recommend the perusal of the notes to the preface of Chambers's Dictionary.

NO. LXX. ON THE EFFECTS OF THE BAD
EXAMPLE OF THE GREAT AMONG THEIR
MENIAL SERVANTS, DOMESTICS, AND DE-
PENDANTS.

IT is found by experience, that there are few orders in the community more profligate than the servants and domestic dependants in rich and noble families. They are greatly to be pitied, as many causes concur to render their corruption almost unavoidable. They have usually been slightly educated, if educated at all, and are often thrust, at an early age, into a wicked world, destitute of all principles moral and religious. The only lesson they have learned with effect, is to admire worldly pomp and grandeur, and to think rank and title capable of justifying any conduct, however iniquitous or immoral. They idolize the great with abject servility, and are insolent to the middle ranks. They assume a share of grandeur from the rank of their masters, and think themselves intitled to domineer over their equals, and to ridicule their superiors. Wherever they go, they diffuse, among the lower orders, a spirit of impudence, discontent, extravagance, and debauchery, and are usually and deservedly esteemed a nuisance to a neighbourhood.

Indeed,

Indeed, the profligacy among the servants of the great is no trifling evil. Much of the corruption of the common people is certainly caused and encreased by their example. The following is a case too common in the country village. A young man, with all the happy simplicity of honesty and innocence, is engaged, in consequence of the good character which he bears, in the service of the neighbouring lord. He goes to the metropolis, and spends a winter in the low haunts of the lowest debauchery and drunkenness. While his master is engaged in the scenes of polite amusement, the poor menial, who waits for him during the tedious watches of the night, solaces himself in the alehouse or the night-cellar, amidst all that can corrupt by examples of fraud, excess, ill language, and every vice which debases humanity. His honest parents, and his brothers and sisters, are, in the mean time, enjoying the sweet slumbers procured by labour and temperance.

At the return of summer, the poor fellow retires with his master into the country. He is finely dressed, and naturally excites the admiration of the village and his own family. What he says comes from him with the authority of an oracle. He considers himself, indeed, as greatly enlightened, and undertakes to communicate the illumination. In the first place he ridicules the rusticity of his friends and neighbours, and laughs at their awkward dress and behaviour. Their patient submission to labour, he calls plodding and slavery; their sobriety and temperance, covetousness and meanness; their conjugal affection and regard to decency, ignorance of the world; and their religion, superstition.

He commonly confirms his opinions by alleging the example of his lord. "My lord," says he, "I would have you know, is a great man, a very great man. He is concerned in governing the nation, making laws, and is in great favour both with his prince and with the people. His patronage is courted, not only by clergymen, such as our vicar, but by bishops and archbishops. Therefore you may depend upon

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" it, whatever your godly books may teach you to the
" contrary, that his manner of acting and thinking
" is right, and such as is most conducive to happiness
" and enjoyment. Now this is my lord's plan. He
" drinks, games, swears, runs in debt, and never
" thinks of paying his bill at the shop; though, to do
" him justice, if he loses at cards, he always pays
" ready money. My lord likewise keeps two or three
" mistresses, besides his wife, with whom, indeed, he
" never sleeps: but then he lets her go very grand;
" and, though two or three of our mercers have broke
" since they have served us, he spares no cost in sup-
" porting her appearance. My lord never goes to
" church, but calls the parsons a pack of hypocrites,
" and employs his Sunday either in travelling, or in
" cards, dice, drinking, and visiting the ladies. I
" usually stand behind my master's chair at dinner,
" and attend very closely to all the conversation: so
" that I often pick up a great deal of improvement.
" And from all I have been able to collect, I am led
" to conclude, that what we hear in sermons, and read
" in the Bible, is all nonsense; and that the true wis-
" dom is to gratify one's senses and passions as much as
" one can, get money in any manner, provided it can
" be gotten safely, and live jollily. So keep it up,
" my lads, and follow mine and my lord's example."

The lads and lasses of the village listen to his lesson with open mouths, and hearts which pant to imitate their kind instructor. Many immediately relinquish the plough and the dairy, and hasten up to London in pursuit of fine clothes, money, and pleasure. They who remain behind, endeavour not to be outdone in drunkenness, gaming, and debauchery, by a lord and his footman; and the village, from being the seat of peace, innocence, industry, and contentment, becomes the sink of sin and misery. Colonies soon emigrate from it to supply the Strand and the ballast-lighters.

This is really no exaggerated representation. There are few country gentlemen, who do not consider the summer residence of a rich or titled man of fashion in their neighbourhood as a serious evil, because of
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the corruption of morals which his corrupted servants introduce. There are not many villages, where some Mr. John or Mrs. Abigail does not endeavour to turn the country people from the errors of their ways, by teaching them, that virtue is ignorance, and religion superstition. The example of rank and riches adds a weight to their arguments, which nothing but woeful experience can counterpoise. So extensive has the contagion been considered, that I have seen it mentioned in advertisements of houses on sale, as a very great recommendation, that there was no nobleman's seat within nine miles of the situation.

Though riches and titles often render their owners adepts in a new kind of philosophy, and teach them to see the vanity of morality and religion in their own case, yet they cannot prevent the want of morality and religion, when it appears in their own servants and dependants, from being severely felt by themselves. The rich and the titled do, indeed, in these times, often pretend to extraordinary benevolence; because it happens to be the fashion. Let then their benevolence be rendered conspicuous among those of their own household; and those of the villages and towns which border on their paternal estates. We cannot help distrusting their pretensions to patriotism and a love of mankind, to universal benevolence and compassion, when we see them, by the force of their powerful example, unloosing all the moral and religious restraints, which tend to preserve the innocence and happiness of individuals and communities; when we see them carelessly diffusing drunkenness, debauchery, disease, and infidelity among those, whom fortune has rendered the humble ministers of their luxury and pride.

No. LXXI. ON MUSIC AS AN AMUSE-
MENT.

MOST of the pleasurable diversions have a tendency, when pursued with ardour, not only to relax in a proper degree, but totally to enervate. They indispose the mind for manly virtue, and introduce a tenderness of feeling ill suited to encounter the usual asperities of common life. But the study of music, under due direction, while it sweetly soothes the sense of hearing, touches the soul, and elevates and refines its nature. Conducted by philosophy, it is able to infuse the noblest thoughts, to urge to the most animated action, to calm the ruffled spirits, and to eradicate every malignant propensity.

Amid the invectives thrown out against the dissipated manners of the present age, its taste for music deserves applause. Even as a source of sensual pleasure, it is one of the purest and most dignified; yet it may be lamented, that it is cultivated merely as a sensual pleasure; because that which titillates the ear, is not always the best calculated to affect the heart. Simple music, for which the present age seems to have little relish, is capable of producing the most violent effects on the sentiments; and the neglect of it is the cause that the mind is often little interested in the most celebrated compositions.

He who has made music the study of his life, and possesses an ear refined by application to fastidious delicacy, is pleased with the curious productions of the Italian composer. But let the admired composition be performed in the hearing of another, whose natural powers are equally sensible, but who has been used to the works of Purcell and Handel only, and he will find his ear not greatly delighted, and his heart totally unaffected.

The kind of music, however excellent as a piece of art, which penetrates no farther than the ear, produces

duces an effect quite different from what was intended by the original invention. As a pleasure of the sense, though elegant in a high degree, it yet contributes to imbecility. The inartificial music of the drum, at which the connoisseur might be enraged, is better able to produce the genuine effects of music, lively emotions of mind, than the fine modulations of a Fischer's haut-boy and a Crofdil's violoncello.

Of what kind is the music that delights those who are stigmatized by the name of vulgar, but who possess all the faculties of perception, in a state undepraved by artificial refinement? Such persons are the unaltered sons of nature; and the sounds which universally please them, are sounds which nature intended should please, and for which she adapted the finely-susceptible sense. The drum, the fife, the trumpet, the harp, the bagpipe, and the dulcimer, are the instruments which inspire the lower ranks with joy and with courage, and which alleviate the sense of the greatest labours and the greatest dangers. If we were to suppose a Giardini condescending to play a fine Italian piece of music at a rural fair, there is little doubt but his audience would be stolen away from him by the itinerant performer on a Scotch bagpipe or the hurdy-gurdy.

There are certain ballads and certain tunes adapted to them which are known to almost every individual in a nation, and which please on every repetition. The music, as well as the poetry of these, is simple in the extreme. The Scotch tunes have a sweetness which delights every ear unspoiled by the complex productions of laborious ingenuity, but which the Italian master knows not to intermix in his boasted composures. And yet nothing can be more natural and easy than the sweet wild wood-notes of the Highland swain.

There are also certain psalm tunes, which, with little merit as technical performances, are enabled to excite in the mind a great degree of devotional extasy. Those of the hundredth and the hundredth and fourth psalms, are the most popular music in England; and they are no less adapted to excite a spirit of piety, and
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elevate the soul to heaven, than to sooth the ear with their simple melody.

These observations are adduced with a view to recommend the adoption of a taste for simple music, among those who study music merely for the entertainment of a domestic circle. It appears to be more pleasing to the ear in its natural state, than the laboured and complicated productions of the professed modern musician; and experience abundantly proves, that it powerfully affects the heart and the imagination. If then it were received in those numerous families, where, in the present age, music forms a constant diversion, its effect on the morals of the people at large would be truly important. It would elevate with piety, warm with generosity, and enlarge and ennoble, correct and purify every affection. There is scarcely any sentiment which may not be excited, increased, diminished, or modified by a piece of music, simple enough to be strongly expressive. Thus powerful as well as sweet, it is to be wondered at, as well as regretted, that it should be superseded by a species of complicated harmony, ingenious indeed, in a high degree, yet possessing little other claim to attention, but as it affords an elegant amusement for a vacant hour. Music at present often forms a considerable part of female education; and it is to be lamented, that an accomplishment, which, when properly regulated, is most efficacious in filling the young mind with virtuous and generous sentiments, should form only an innocent pastime and polite employment.

Paradoxical as it may appear, it is really true, that music seems of late to be addressed to the eye as well as to the ear. Dexterity of execution, the wonderfully expeditious motion of the fingers, the hand, and the arm, cause an equal share of applause with the tones of the instrument. He who can hold his breath the longest, is proportionably honoured with the longest continuation of plaudits. The sweetest shepherd that ever piped on his Doric reed, would be less applauded than he who can make his pipe squeak for the space of five minutes without respiration. The simple lyre of Apollo would scarcely engage attention, while the
finger

finger of a modern was dancing on the strings of a violoncello. To attain to this stupendous excellence of rapid execution, requires the unlimited labour of a life; while a much less degree of application would enable a performer to ravish and captivate the heart, if the natural feelings were not superseded by acquired taste.

It is often urged as a reason for neglecting the study and performance of music, that to excel in it, or to play in such a manner as not to offend a judge, requires a portion of time incompatible with an attention to more valuable acquirements. To arrive at this surprising expedition, this musical legerdemain, it is indeed necessary to do little else than scrape and pipe. But a comparatively moderate dexterity is sufficient to effect all the great purposes of music, those of moving the passions in the cause of virtue, and of exciting sentiments of manly pleasure. Fortunately, the simple music, which is to produce these desirable effects, is the most easily performed. The most powerful influence of music ever known, is recorded in the volumes of antiquity; but it is certain, that the musical instruments of antiquity were simple in so great a degree, that it has perplexed the modern musician to discover how they were capable of producing a tolerable harmony. Yet the feats of Timotheus, though astonishing, are thought by many not to have been fabulous. He, indeed, who looks into the opera-house, after reading Dryden's Ode, will be induced, from the vacant countenance and sleepy eye, to judge that the musical art of Timotheus may be numbered among the lost arts in which antiquity excelled, and which the moderns ambitiously, yet vainly, imitate.

To produce the full effect of music, it is necessary that the sister art, which operates in conjunction with it, should not be united by a forced alliance. Good poetry and good music, each of which is separately powerful, acquire, by a proper union, an irresistible force over the human heart. Yet every one knows, that many a fine piece of music is deformed by the most wretched rhymes that were ever tagged by a hungry poetaster. Songs we have in abundance, written by

authors of acknowledged excellence; and it is surely a want of spirit to adopt, in preference to these, the nonsense which a musician has purchased in Grubstreet, to be accompanied by his excellent melody. It is indeed to be wished, that the superior poets of the age would combine with the best composers of music, and do honour to themselves, and to the arts they love, in cementing, by the liberal communication of mutual assistance, so natural and desirable an union as that of music and poetry.

No. LXXII. ON THE BEST METHOD OF EXCITING LITERARY GENIUS IN BOYS WHO POSSESS IT.

THAT tender sensibility which always accompanies true genius, often lays open the heart to such early impressions as are very unfavourable to a virtuous and prudential conduct. Many parents have therefore expressed a wish, that their sons might possess a plain understanding, without any of that fine and susceptible delicacy which is supposed to constitute a genius.

But it appears to me, that this glorious gift of heaven ought not to be so lightly esteemed. To be superior to other men in the superior part of man, the mind; to perceive external nature with greater acuteness than others; to possess the powers of memory, reflection, imagination, to a fuller extent, and to be more feelingly alive to all the affections of the heart, what is it but to have been favoured by heaven with a more excellent nature, to have been rendered capable of distinguished happiness, and of communicating good in an effectual and extensive manner to the world at large? Not to wish for such a condition as this, nor to be thankful for it when it has fallen to ourselves or our children, is a degree of ingratitude humiliating to humanity.

And if it be true, that genius is exposed to peculiar dangers at an early age, I would not infer, that genius

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is not to be desired, but that the moral conduct of him, in whom it appears, should be kept under the restraints of parental authority, with uncommon strictness of discipline and vigilance of observation. It is not sufficient merely to give moral cautions, but actual restraints must be imposed; for, after all the boasts of moral philosophy, the most effectual method of restraining young people from vice, is to watch them circumspectly, to keep them at home, and at a distance from temptation. That susceptibility of temper, which, when unrestrained, leads to vicious habits and indulgencies, will strongly attach itself to all that is laudable and lovely, if care is taken, that nothing but what is truly so be allowed to solicit the attention. Elegant letters will furnish a variety of delightful objects, capable of engrossing both the affections and the imagination, so long as the allurements of the senses are, as much as possible, removed from the view.

Genius then being an endowment most desirable, and not necessarily attended either with misconduct or misfortune, I shall think myself usefully employed in attempting to point out a few methods which may contribute to excite it. The flint must be struck in a proper manner, and with proper materials, before the latent spark can be elicited.

Instead of exercising the understanding only at a very early age, I think a very considerable share of attention should be paid to the cultivation of the fancy. For this purpose, the most entertaining story-books should be read as an amusement. The more romantic the better adapted to the purpose. The popular histories of giants and fairies, enchanted castles, and ideal beings of uncouth form, and whatever strongly strikes the imagination, or deeply affects the heart, is calculated to vivify the latent seeds of embryo genius. Many of those little books, which are sold by itinerant pedlars to children and servants, and which are thought too despicable to deserve the attention of the learned, have constituted the mental food of our sublimest writers in the age of infancy. Not only the old romances, but the common historical ballads of rudest composition, have been read with delight by our best poets. The

works of Shakespeare bear evident marks of that species of reading in which he took pleasure. His witches, his magicians, his ghosts, and all those airy nothings to which he gave a local habitation and a name, owe their origin to the poet's feeding his fancy on the romantic and superstitious writings of the darker ages. It appears too, that Milton was extensively acquainted with romances, and that he felt a peculiar pleasure in their perusal. The examples of such men powerfully confirm the propriety of that mode of exciting genius which I principally recommend.

But this sort of books must be placed in the hands of children merely as matter of entertainment; and if they do not take delight in them, they must be laid aside for a more convenient season. It would be ridiculous to read them as a task, and would indeed frustrate the intention; for it is the delight which they afford to the infant fancy, which constitutes their principal utility. They are found, for the most part, to be particularly adapted to the curious and inexperienced mind of children: they are read with the closest attention; they enable the soul to feel its lively energies expanding to strength and maturity; and they operate on the pregnant mind like a warm vernal shower on a fertile field.

It must indeed be allowed that, with all their fascinating power over the young imagination, they sometimes exhibit nonsense and futility. Many parents and instructors will therefore object to the perusal of them. If these, however, may be rejected, yet I think it absolutely necessary, that some books of similar effect should be substituted in their place; and I cannot help thinking, that none are better suited to the purpose than those of Milton and Shakespeare. An objector may urge, that a young boy will often be at a loss to understand them. But let not this be regarded. Let him read on, and pass over what he does not understand, without impeding his progress. He will of course understand them better on every subsequent reading; and his genius will be called forth much more powerfully, by dwelling on what he understands, and receiving a proper impression from it, than

by stopping to develope difficulties with the coldness of a critic.

Simple, narrative, and pathetic poetry, is indeed so pleasing to the pure and unvitiated minds of boys, that it can scarcely fail to excite their portion of genius, if they possess any; but there are also many works in prose capable of producing the same effect. Rousseau has recommended Robinson Crusoe. I entirely agree with him, on the peculiar propriety of feeding the young mind with a book so interesting, and so easy of comprehension. Don Quixotte may be recommended for the same purpose. Oriental tales, such as abound in the periodical essayists, are peculiarly proper. Old Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, though a strange performance, very powerfully affects the fancy, and may be used with great advantage, in accomplishing the purpose of exciting genius. The Arabian Nights Entertainments, the Tales of The Genii, and the Death of Abel, though they may not be entirely approved by a mature understanding and taste, are well calculated to kindle a flame in the bosoms of boys; but, perhaps, no book would be found to afford better passages for this purpose than the Bible, if a little care were taken, by the superintendants of education, to select those parts, which are so beautifully distinguished for simple sublimity and unaffected pathos.

No. LXXIII. ON THE REASONABLENESS OF
THE ANTIQUARIAN TASTE.

THE baneful effects of those prejudices, which the mind forms from an early and wrong association of ideas, have been often felt and lamented in the several departments of morals, of science, and of religion. They have been experienced in a similar manner, though indeed with less injury to society, in a province, where the want of adequate objects to excite jealousy and passion might be supposed to preclude their operation; in the studies of humanity and polite letters. To the influence of unjust prepossession, it
must

must be attributed, that some kinds of literary pursuits, indisputably innocent at least, such as the study of antiquities, have been attacked with all the shafts of pointed ridicule.

One circumstance, which has contributed to extenuate the value of researches into antiquity, is a very exalted opinion of the scientific attainments of the present age. If progressive improvement is universally, and in every instance, the consequence of progressive years, the opinion and the result of it might perhaps be well founded. But though it must be allowed, that the advancement of valuable science has been disproportionably rapid within the space of the last two or three centuries; though the invention of printing, of the compass, and of many auxiliary instruments, and the diffusion of a liberal spirit, have facilitated modern enquiries of every kind, and consequently accumulated a sum of knowledge, which preceding ages could scarcely hope to obtain; yet it must be considered, that in the long interval of mental darkness which preceded these inventions, many historical events must have happened, many practices prevailed, many modes of convenience have been adopted, which it may concern mankind to know, but which cannot be recalled but by the labours of the antiquary. The general light enjoyed by the present age is strong and diffusive; but it cannot illuminate these distant periods, unless its beams are concentrated upon them. The rays of the sun are abundantly sufficient to guide our steps on the surface of the earth; but he who investigates the subterraneous cavern must have recourse to the assistance of the lamp.

The deep researches of our modern scholars have sometimes thrown additional light on scriptural subjects, and have had no inconsiderable influence in dissipating the doubts of the sceptical. The discovery and explanation of a medal by a most ingenious illustrator of antient mythology, have exhibited to the deist a very powerful confirmation of the scriptural account of the deluge. It is certainly an erroneous judgment which has censured the studies of the medallist as nugatory. To antient coins, gems, and medals, learning in general is greatly indebted, and history owes

some of its most authentic records. All the usual materials to which writing has been committed are of a perishable nature, exposed to irrecoverable destruction from a thousand slight accidents, and inevitably doomed to perish, after a short period, by the corrosion of time. But the inscription on the faithful metal has been preserved, without injury, from the earliest periods of civilization. To seem to pay a veneration to rust, and to estimate the current coin at less than the mutilated brass or copper of a Roman emperor, may appear ridiculous to him, who has not duly considered the extensive utility of these acquisitions; but he who has observed light reflected from an apparently contemptible coin, on history sacred and profane, will respect the laudable though singular pursuit of the virtuoso.

Nor will it be found, that in subjects of comparatively less importance than the truth of religion, and the authenticity of historical information, the result of the antiquary's labour is destitute of utility. He must have formed a very inadequate idea of the powers and the energy of the human intellect, who imagines that nothing was produced, even in the darkest ages, by the efforts of native ingenuity, worthy the adoption of a more refined period. Not only in science but in politics and æconomics, in the less splendid arts, which administer to convenience and enjoyment, much information may be derived, by careful search, from times which have been in general neglected, as affording nothing to repay the labour of attention. This at least is certain, that whatever they afford of real use, can only be elicited from the embarrassment in which it is entangled by the sagacious antiquary. The ignorance of the ages in question necessarily occasioned a paucity of written memorials. Few and imperfect as these have been, nothing but unwearied perseverance, joined to great penetration, could draw them from their obscure repositories, and give them a sufficient degree of perspicuity. It is happy for mankind, that the love of antiquities is a passion which operates with no inconsiderable violence. Nothing less could stimulate the laborious student to such long and painful investi-

investigations, as are often necessary to procure satisfactory information. He, however, who has perseverance enough to surmount all difficulties, which oppose his progress in a dark and rugged path, ought to be vindicated from the censures of raillery, however futile his discovery may sometimes appear to a superficial observer. Many of our most excellent principles in the laws of England, many of our envied political institutions owe their origin to feudal times; to those times which the classical scholar is tempted to overlook as presenting little to exercise and reward ingenuity. But it may reasonably be concluded, that they who could devise legal and civil modes of judging and acting, avowedly worthy the imitation of the most improved ages, were often equally successful in their other inventions. In developing these, the antiquary sometimes finds, and perhaps dwells upon less important matters, which are only entertaining; but he is no more to be condemned than the voyager, who stops to contemplate the curiosities which occur in his passage, yet, at the same time, forgets not the place or object of his destination.

It has been mistakenly supposed, that the studies of the antiquary are destitute of entertainment. To the lover of them, they unquestionably have afforded pleasure, even under the most disadvantageous circumstances; but, in the present age, they have also entered on a department, which engages the attention of the general scholar, and the man of taste and polite learning. They have been employed in recovering, from antient manuscripts and scarce books, the poetry of our forefathers; and he who is most averse from the more dry and recondite researches, must acknowledge his obligations to those who have judiciously compiled the reliques of our antient poetry.

Obvious as appears the utility of enquiring into the obscure scenes of remote antiquity, it has given rise to sarcasm and ridicule. Circumstances, it must be confessed, have sometimes arisen, which seem to justify some degree of raillery. For it is true, that, in the course of various and profound researches, many collateral discoveries will be made, whose sole utility consists

sills in the gratification of curiosity. A common utensil, of little dignity or use, has sometimes exercised the conjectural ingenuity of the antiquary, to the diversion of those who have not imbibed a congenial spirit. But however contemptible the discovery of trifling objects may have been, when considered in itself, it has acquired a degree of value by the general and probable consequences. It has often led to objects of real importance, by suggesting hints, which might never have occurred, had not the enquiry been commenced and prosecuted with vigour. And the maxim established in a less liberal pursuit, that the smallest gains are not to be neglected by him who endeavours to amass a fortune, must be steadily attended to in a successful pursuit of knowledge.

And, indeed, allowing that many of the results of antiquarian sagacity are not of high importance, yet will not this concession tend to render the study of antiquities a contemptible employment. It is a fruitful source of the pleasures of imagination. That lively faculty of the human mind is greatly delighted with the effort it makes in returning back to past ages, in being intimately conversant with manners and characters totally different from the present, in bringing back to view scenes that have long vanished, and tracing the progress of human improvements from their embryo state to their comparative maturity.

That which affords this species and degree of pleasure is highly worthy of cultivation. For it may with justice be asserted, that they who judge scarcely any thing worthy of serious pursuit which is not attended with evident and palpable profit, are too severe in their restrictions. Their conceptions are certainly too limited, when they circumscribe advantage within the bounds of personal, or even public emolument. Every intellectual effort, which calls off the attention from less refined avocations; every liberal study, which furnishes an innocent pleasure, is useful, as it is favourable to virtue, and adds to the number of safe indulgences.

No. LXXIV. OBJECTIONS TO THE STUDY
OF ANTIQUITIES WHEN IMPROPERLY PUR-
SUED.

TO arraign any part of those studies, which exercise the talents of the liberal and ingenious, is by no means a desirable province. Under certain circumstances, and with due restrictions, they are all, in a high degree, laudable. But since excellence admits gradations, and since even estimable qualities and virtuous exertions are rendered blameable by excess, it becomes expedient to point out the line which separates fictitious from real utility, and to rescind those redundancies, which, like a morbid excrescence on a beautiful body, superinduce deformity on grace, and give an alloy to intrinsic value. Such an attempt, instead of extenuating, will tend to enhance the worth of those things which are really valuable.

These ideas will perhaps justify us in reviewing the objections which may be made to the pursuits of the antiquary. Though these pursuits are unquestionably too respectable to be condemned in general, yet their perversion and their excess afford ample scope for liberal censure.

That the studies of the antiquary have afforded matter for comic ridicule is not to be wondered at, when it is considered, with how serious an air he has usually descanted on trifling subjects. An implement originally contemptible, and rendered still more worthless by decay, no sooner falls into the hands of the admirer of ancient remains, than it excites a degree of admiration approaching to idolatry, and furnishes matter for a profound dissertation. Many fanciful conjectures are formed, a thousand collateral hints suggested, and a decisive sentence at last pronounced, with all the formal process of dictatorial authority. After all the learning displayed, and sagacity exerted, it not unusually happens,

happens, that a spectator, under the guidance of common sense, discovers, that what has given rise to so much discussion is of modern fabric and invention, accidentally or artfully disguised. Among the various modes of acquiring money invented by the restless mind of man, it has been one to imitate the effects of time, to make an artificial rust, to accelerate decay, and deceive the antiquary.

Few studies are so much exposed to the delusion of forgery as those of antiquities. Though the antiquary has sometimes made his palate the criterion of a genuine rust, and has been able to taste the difference between Roman or Attic *arugo*, and the sophisticated pollution of the modern counterfeit; yet, by the temporary indisposition of the organs of taste, he has often been known to admit into his invaluable collection pieces of less value, and of less antiquity, than the lowest coin of the current specie. Many an Otho has been fabricated by a modern copper-smith, who has turned his base metal to good account, by converting it into the twelve Cæsars. And a piece of brass, cried down as too base to pass with the stamp of a modern monarch, has become current and valuable as the coin of a Roman emperor.

Nor is a full dependence to be placed on those archives and written memorials, on the authenticity of which modern history most confidently relies. An instance of the facility with which an appearance of antiquity can be given to the parchment, has occurred in our own times and country. The late ingenious, but unfortunate author of the pretended poems of Rowley, was able not only to imitate the modes of writing which prevailed among our ancestors, but to colour the parchment with the spurious marks of antiquity, in so artful a manner, as to deceive even those who were conversant in antient writings, and who were justly esteemed for their superior penetration. And the misfortune is, that as the love of antiquities becomes more prevalent, the multitude of such impositions increases from the hope of additional reward. The pleasure which some have found in successful deception has given rise to wanton forgery;

forgery; and, while a great share of attention continues to be paid to the reliques of past ages, such deceptions will abound, because they are easy to invent, and are productive of gain. They who are best able to repay the labours of ingenious research, are often most exposed to the delusions of the artful, by that degree of sanguine ardour which they possess, and which is wholly incompatible with the exercise of discernment.

To assert that history has seldom received valuable light from the studies of the antiquary, is to indulge in declamatory invective at the expence of veracity. And yet it must be confessed, that the accession to real and important knowledge has scarcely been proportionate to the labour exerted. Curiosity has been abundantly gratified; but it does not appear, that many of the discoveries which have afforded pleasure, have been attended with any other consequence greatly observable. It does not appear that much light has been derived from them for the direction of manual arts, for the illustration of physical phenomena, for the regulation of manners, for the embellishment, or for the accommodation of life. That degree of ingenuity and perseverance, which might have made valuable improvements in all these departments, has been often wasted in dull Museums, and lavished away in producing unsatisfactory conjectures on subjects, where even obvious truth would be unimportant. The boasted information of ancient coins and marbles is for the most part imperfect, often equivocal, and sometimes unintelligible. The perspicacious eye of an antiquary has indeed discovered inscriptions satisfactory to himself, but which could neither be seen nor acknowledged by the more obtuse vision of a common observer. Inscriptions thus ambiguous, and information thus obscure, though they may give scope for ingenious conjecture, and amuse the curious, can seldom afford solid support, or give clear illustration to the page of history.

With respect to the collector of that kind of reliques, which were at first of no value, are attended with no useful consequence near or remote, and derive all their power of exciting esteem from the marks of that duration, which has occasioned their decay, he certainly

has done discredit to the study of antiquities. He has pursued trifles with an ardour justifiable only in important business, and consumed time and ingenuity in effecting no adequate purpose. By the discerning part of mankind, he will be classed in the same rank with the admirer of a trinket, the hunter of a butterfly, the cultivator of a flower, and the connoisseur in mosses. Such pursuits we acknowledge to be harmless, and the praise usually terminates in that single epithet. He who venerates a contemptible relique is actuated with a degree of the pilgrim's superstition, less pernicious indeed in its effects, but scarcely less absurd in its principle.

But let not the justice of liberal and candid censure be disgraced by indiscriminate and general invective. From the researches of those who have brought to light the antiquities of ancient Greece and Rome, from our own Potter and Kennet, our scholastic studies derive daily assistance. It is easy to enumerate the names of many, who have very successfully laboured in this department. Our own country can display a long list of illustrious antiquaries, who have judiciously trodden in the footsteps of a Camden, a Leland, and a Hearne. It must at the same time be lamented, that it can exhibit a great number, who, by perverting the pursuit, have rendered it ridiculous.

Raillery and censure are perhaps more frequently misplaced and ill-directed than applause. They have often been carried to excess, and point d at wrong objects, when they have chosen the study of antiquities for the display of their poignancy. The attack should only be levelled at abuses and perversion. The correction of these will restore its proper dignity to the study of antiquities, and cause the shafts of ridicule, which have been successfully thrown at it, to recoil on the aggressors. The result will be, that the attention, which is due to real excellence and experienced utility, will cease to be paid to objects which possess only an imaginary value, derived from an equivocal or supposititious source, the ideal merit of a long duration.

No. LXXV. ON THE NECESSITY OF AN ATTENTION TO THINGS AS WELL AS BOOKS, EXEMPLIFIED IN THE INSTANCE OF A FELLOW OF A COLLEGE. IN A LETTER.

S I R,

AFTER thirty years constant residence at the university, I thought myself supremely happy, when I was at last presented by my college to a living worth two hundred a year. During so long a period, I had treasured up many ideas for the regulation of my future conduct, and congratulated myself, that my theory was now to be reduced to practice.

I found my parsonage house a large antiquated building, in a delightful situation, and capable of very great improvement. I had been used to see every thing around me in the best order, and had acquired a love of external decency in all the articles of dress and habitation. I sent therefore, without hesitation, for the builder, and gave him an unlimited order to repair every thing in a style of becoming elegance. The work was done entirely to my mind, and I had nothing to find fault with but the bill, which came to three times the sum mentioned in the estimate, and almost exhausted the little savings of a collegiate life.

My garden was laid out in gravel walks intersecting each other at right angles, and its only ornaments were a few yew-trees clipped into peacocks. I ordered every tree and plant to be rooted up, the walks to be turned to serpentine, and the whole to be planted with the most beautiful shrubs. A close of about an acre at the bottom lay so contiguous, that it tempted me to add it to the garden. No labour or ingenuity was spared, and I own I felt a little satisfaction in a consciousness of possessing the grounds about me in a taste

superior to the Esquire himself. In the ardour of reformation it did not occur, that I was not only expending more than I could afford, but involving myself in a necessity of keeping an additional and skilful servant, constantly to superintend my improvements. I had neglected utility for ornaments, and had planted the fir and the laurel instead of the fruit-tree and the pot-herb. After incurring some ridicule of the neighbourhood, I was obliged to change my shrubbery to a cabbage-garden, and to resume my close as pasture ground for my poney.

I no sooner settled, than it was suggested to me, by an attorney who wanted business, that my living was worth much more than I should receive, and that I owed it to myself and successors to receive the tythes in kind. I entered on the project with great zeal, built a barn, and bought a cart; but in a meeting of farmers, not one of whom could read or write his own name, I was talked out of the scheme, and prevailed on to let my living for life, two-thirds under its real value.

I had ever entertained exalted ideas of the utility and pleasure of old English hospitality, and had promised myself a plentiful table whenever I should become master of a house. The best of wines, the best of provisions were brought to it, and these were allurements that prevented the possibility of its being deserted. The neighbouring gentlemen liked both my port and ale, and I was so happy as to give them satisfaction with my Madeira; a circumstance which, though it pleased them and me at the time, was a subject of some uneasiness to my wine merchant, who found that a pipe a year was a great tax on an annual income of two hundred pounds.

The baker's, butcher's, and maltster's bills were a kind of manuscripts never met with in the Bodleian, and to the perusal of which I was quite unused. I had much rather have collated a dozen Greek copies, than have cast up a sum consisting of a dozen articles. This disinclination soon introduced a perplexity in my accounts, which I was too indolent to unravel, till at last an accumulation of debt required a degree of economy to which my spirit could not without difficulty submit.

I had

I had been used for thirty years to scarcely any interruption, save the tinkling of the chapel and the dinner bell, and could not help being disgusted at the noise of servants, and the bustle of a family. Amid the din which was seldom interrupted, how often did I wish myself transported to the blissful region of the common room fire-side! Delightful retreat! where never female shewed her head since the days of the founder!

There was one circumstance attending my new situation, which, though only an imaginary evil, gave me at first a sensible mortification. As a senior fellow, I was a little monarch within the verge of my college. The statutes had required that persons of the lower degrees should pass before me, nay, stand in the quadrangle, whenever I was present, with heads uncovered. From this general obeisance, and from many other circumstances, I had been led to conceive myself a person of great importance. I was so, indeed, in the circumscribed limits of my society. But the misfortune was, that I could not easily free myself from the consciousness of it when no longer a member, and expected a similar degree of deference from all I met, which cannot be paid in the busy world without inconvenience.

Though by no means remarkable for diffidence at college, I felt myself awkward and uneasy, when admitted into the company of those who were styled the polite. I had thought and read upon most subjects; yet I found my remarks less attended to in a fashionable circle than those of the confessedly illiterate. Matter I possessed; but the manner was wanting. That easy kind of trifling, which pleases without fatiguing the attention of the superficial, was not among my academical acquirements. Thus, with a great inclination, and some ability to join in general conversation and intercourse, I was almost reduced to a state of solitude, and wished in vain for the frank and good-natured associates of the common room.

Upon the whole, my condition is far less happy and less respectable, than I had reason to expect. I have discovered, when it is almost too late, that I had confined my views within too narrow limits, by attending only to the affairs of a college. I have learned the necessity

necessity of studying things with all the attention paid to an abstruse science; and will recommend it to those, whose prospects in life are similar to mine, to devote some part of their time to the consideration of common affairs; of a few mechanic arts, such as concern building, repairing, gardening; of agriculture, and of the manners of husbandmen, with whom, in the business of tythes, they will be obliged to negotiate. They will thus not only spend the close of their lives with more pleasure to themselves, but will more effectually accomplish the ends of the clerical profession.

If the imprudence of a contrary conduct, I stand a melancholy instance. I am left alone, at a time when the amusement of companions is most wanted to help out the last stage in the journey of life. I am both deserted and defrauded. I remain in a total ignorance of the world, at a period when others are become wise by experience; and I am involved in the mistakes of youth, without its amiable qualities to palliate them.

No. LXXVI. ON THE INFLUENCE OF FASHION.

THEY who are exempted by their elevated condition from the confinement of commercial and professional life, involve themselves in voluntary slavery by engaging in the service of the tyrant fashion. They are compelled to abstain from actions in themselves pleasing and innocent, however strong their inclination to them, because the caprice of some distinguished character has prohibited them by his example. Like the dullest of animals, they are driven round the same circle, from which once to deviate would subject them to an appellation of all others the most formidable. To be called profligate, extravagant, intemperate, or even wicked, might be tolerated with patience; but who could bear to live with the epithet of ungenteel?

People of fashion, once admitted to this honourable title, form a little world of their own, and learn to lock

look down upon all others as beings of a subordinate nature. It is then a natural question, In what does this superiority consist? It arises not from learning, for the most illiterate claim it, and are indulged in the claim; it arises not from virtue, for the most vicious are not excluded. Wealth, beauty, birth, and elegance, are not the only qualifications for it, because many enjoy it who have no just pretension to either, and many are excluded who possess them all. It seems to be a combination of numbers under two or three leaders in high life, who agree to imitate each other, and to maintain, by the majority of voices, and the effrontery of pride, that all they do is proper, and all they say is sensible; that their dress is becoming, their manners polite, their houses tasteful, their furniture, their carriages, all that appertains to them, the very quintessence of real beauty. Those who come not within the pale of their jurisdiction, they condemn with papal authority to perpetual insignificance. They stigmatize them by wholesale, as people whom nobody knows, as the scum of the earth, as born only to minister to their pride, and to supply the wants of their luxury.

Groundless are the pretensions of this confederacy, no pains are avoided to become an adopted member. For this, the stripling squanders his patrimony, and destroys his constitution. For this, the virgin bloom of innocence and beauty is withered at the vigils of the card-table. For this, the loss of integrity, and public infamy, are willingly incurred; and it is agreed by many, that it were better to go out of the world, than to live in it and be unfashionable.

If this distinction is really valuable, and if the happiness or misery of life depends upon obtaining or losing it, then are the thousands who walk the private path of life, objects of the sincerest pity. Some consolation must be devised for the greater part of the community who have never breathed the atmosphere of St. James's, nor embarrassed their fortunes, nor ruined their health, in pursuit of this glorious elevation. Perhaps, on an impartial review it will appear, that these are really
possessed

possessed of that happiness which vanity would arrogate to itself, and yet only seems to obtain.

The middle ranks of mankind are the most virtuous, the best accomplished, and the most capable of enjoying the pleasures and advantages which fall to the lot of human nature. It is not the least of these, that they are free from the necessity of attending to those formalities, which engross the attention and waste the time of the higher classes, without any adequate return of solid satisfaction. Horace, who was far less illustrious by his birth and station, than by his elegance of manners, was wont to congratulate himself, that he could ride on a little mule to the remotest town of Italy without ridicule or molestation; while his patrons could hardly move a step, but with the unwieldy pomp of an equipage and retinue. The single article of dress, which, when splendid, requires the labour and attention of many hours, becomes a wretched task to those who wish to employ their time with honour, with improvement, with pleasure, and the possibility of a satisfactory retrospection.

Visits of form, of which every one complains, yet to which every one in some measure submits, are absolutely necessary to keep up the union of the fashionable confederacy. The more numerous, the more honourable. To be permitted to spend five minutes, or to leave a card at the houses of half the inhabitants of the politer streets, is a felicity which compensates all the trouble of attendance and tedious preparation. To behold a train of coaches, some perhaps with coronets on their sides, crowding to their door; to hear the fulminations of a skilful footman, are joys of which the inhabitants of a rural retreat has little conception, but which delightfully affect the fine feelings of those who are made of purer clay, and honoured with the name of fashionable.

From this severe persecution, the man who aspires not at such honours is happily free. He visits his friend and neighbour, because he feels friendly sentiments for him, and is received with cordiality. The interval of company he can devote to study, and to the pur-

suit of business and amusement; for his communications with his friends require not all the long and preparatory trouble of fashionable formality. In the unreserved pleasures of conversation, he looks with reciprocal pity on the clubs in St. James's-street, nor envies those who knock at an hundred doors in an evening, and who possess the glorious privilege of sitting half an hour in the company of those, whose professions supply the place of sincerity.

The effects of fashion constitute, in the moral world, very wonderful phenomena. Fashion can transform deformity to beauty, and beauty to deformity. When we view the dresses in a picture-gallery, we are tempted to ridicule the shocking taste of our grandfathers and grandmothers; and yet there is not the least doubt, but that they appeared beautiful and becoming when they were worn, and that the garb of the spectator, who now censures them, would have been then equally ridiculous. During the short period of a life, the fluctuations of taste are strikingly remarkable. A small buckle or a large buckle, a short coat or a long coat, a high or low head-dress, appear in their turns, in the course of only a few years, laughably absurd. Manners, books, poetry, painting, building, gardening, undergo a similar alteration. The prevailing taste is at the time supposed to be the perfect taste; a few years pass, and it is exploded as monstrous; a new one is adopted; that also is soon despised, and the old one, in the capricious vicissitudes of the innovating spirit, is once more revived, to repeat its revolution.

There is certainly a standard of rectitude in manners, decorum, and taste; but it is more easily discovered than preserved. The vanity of the great and opulent will ever be affecting new modes, in order to increase that notice to which it thinks itself entitled. The lower ranks will imitate them as soon as they have discovered the innovation. Whether right or wrong, beautiful or deformed, in the essential nature of things, is of little moment. The pattern is set by a superior, and authority will at any time countenance absurdity. A hat, a coat, a shoe deemed fit to be worn only by a great grandfire, is no sooner put on by a dictator of fashions,

fashions, than it becomes graceful in the extreme, and is generally adopted from the first lord of the treasury to the apprentice in Houndsditch.

It must be allowed, indeed, that while Fashion exerts her arbitrary power in matters which tend not to the corruption of morals, or of taste in the fine arts, she may be suffered to rule without limitation. But the misfortune is, that, like other potentates, she will encroach on provinces where her jurisdiction is usurped. The variations she is continually introducing in dress, are of service in promoting commerce. The whims of the rich feed the poor. The variety and the restlessness caused by the changes in the modes of external embellishment, contribute to please and employ those whose wealth and personal insignificance prevent them from finding more manly objects and more rational entertainment. But when the same caprice, which gives law to the wardrobe, extends itself to the library; when the legislator of an assembly dictates in the schools, regulates religion, and directs education, it is time that reason should vindicate her rights against the encroachments of folly.

Yet so fascinating is the influence of general example, that many who possess reason in an improved state, are known to follow fashion with blind obedience. The scholar and the philosopher is hurried away with the rapidity of the torrent. To stand singular, is to present a mark for the shafts of scorn and malevolence. For the sake of ease, therefore, men are induced to join the throng, which they must resist without success, but not without receiving injury in the conflict. Compliance is thought wisdom, where opposition is inefficacious.

With respect to the distinction claimed by people of fashion, it is certain, that they who are elevated by station, fortune, and a correspondent education, are often distinguished by a peculiar elegance of manners resulting from their improvements. But this ought not to inspire pride, or teach them to separate from the rest of mankind. It should give them a spirit of benevolence, and lead them to promote the happiness of others, in return for the bountiful goodness of Providence in bestowing on them superior advantages, without any peculiar merit of their own. They should endeavour to
convince

convince themselves, that the warmest philanthropist is the truest gentleman, and that the most becoming fashion is to do all the good they can to individuals and to society.

NO. LXXVII. ON SOME PARTS OF THE
DISCIPLINE IN OUR ENGLISH UNIVER-
SITIES.

OUR English universities are held in high esteem among foreigners; and, indeed, considering the number of great men, who have received a part of their education in them, and their opulent establishments of colleges and professorships, they are really respectable. I have therefore been the more disposed to lament, that the public exercises should be so futile and absurd, as to deserve not only the severity of censure, but the utmost poignancy of ridicule.

Reverence, it has been justly remarked, is always increased by the distance of the object. The world at large, who hear of colleges like palaces devoted to learning, of princely estates bequeathed for the support of professors, of public libraries and schools for every science, are disposed to view the consecrated place in which they abound with peculiar veneration. Accidental visitors also, who behold the superb dining halls, the painted chapels, the luxurious common rooms, the elegant chambers, and a race of mortals, in a peculiar dress, strutting through the streets with a solemn air of importance; when they see all the doctors, both the proctors, with all the heads of colleges and halls, in solemn procession, with their velvet sleeves, scarlet gowns, hoods, black, red and purple—cannot but be struck with the appearance, and are naturally led to conclude, that here, at length, wisdom, science, learning, and whatever else is praiseworthy, for ever flourish and abound.

Without entering into an invidious and particular examination of the subject, we may cursorily observe, that after all this pompous ostentation, and this profuse expence,

pence, the public has not, of late at least, been indebted for the greatest improvements in science and learning, to all the doctors, both the proctors, nor to all the heads of colleges and halls laid together. That populous university, London, and that region of literary labour, Scotland, have seized every palm of literary honour, and left the sons of Oxford and Cambridge to enjoy substantial comforts, in the smoke of the common or combination room. The burfar's books are the only manuscripts of any value produced in many colleges; and the sweets of pensions, exhibitions, fines, fellowships, and petty offices, the chief objects of academical pursuit.

If I were to enter into the many laughable absurdities of collegiate life and university institutions, as they now stand, I should exceed the limits of my paper. It is my intention at present only to acquaint the public with the exercises, which one celebrated seat of the Muses requires, of those who seek the envied honour of a Master of Arts degree. I speak not from displeasure or resentment; but voluntarily incur the odium of many persons attached by interest and connections to the universities, with no other motive than the desire of removing the disgrace of those noble establishments, by exposing the futility of the exercises to public animadversion.

The youth, whose heart pants for the honour of a Bachelor of Arts degree, must wait patiently till near four years have revolved. But this time is not to be spent idly. No; he is obliged, during this period, once to oppose, and once to respond, in disputations held in the public schools—a formidable sound, and a dreadful idea; but, on closer attention, the fear will vanish, and contempt supply its place.

This opposing and responding is termed, in the cant of the place, *doing generals*. Two boys, or men, as they call themselves, agree to *do generals* together. The first step in this mighty work is to procure arguments. These are always handed down, from generation to generation, on long slips of paper, and consist of foolish syllogisms on foolish subjects, of the formation or the signification of which, the respondent and opponent seldom know more than an infant in swaddling cloaths. The next step is to go for a *liceat* to
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one of the petty officers, called the Regent-Master of the Schools, who subscribes his name to the questions, and receives sixpence as his fee. When the important day arrives, the two doughty disputants go into a large dusty room, full of dirt and cobwebs, with walls and wainscot decorated with the names of former disputants, who, to divert the tedious hours, cut out their names with their penknives, or wrote verses with a pencil. Here they sit in mean desks, opposite to each other, from one o'clock till three. Not once in a hundred times does any officer enter; and, if he does, he hears one syllogism or two, and then makes a bow, and departs, as he came and remained, in solemn silence. The disputants then return to the amusement of cutting the desks, carving their names, or reading Sterne's Sentimental Journey, or some other edifying novel. When this exercise is duly performed by both parties, they have a right to the title and insignia of *Sophs*; but not before they have been formally *created* by one of the regent-masters, before whom they kneel, while he lays a volume of Aristotle's works on their heads, and puts on a hood, a piece of black crape, hanging from their necks, down to their heels; which crape, it is expressly ordained by a statute in this case made and provided, shall be plain, and unadorned either with wool or with fur.

The next exercise is called *doing juraments*, which consists of just stepping into the school and *proposing one syllogism*, for the sake of complying with the *letter of the statute*; and this *noble* exercise is termed *doing juraments*, which, being interpreted, signifies *the evading of one's oath*.

And this work done, a great progress is made towards the wished-for honour of a bachelor's degree. There remain only one or two trifling forms, and another disputation almost exactly similar to *doing generals*, but called *answering under bachelor*, previous to the awful examination.

Every candidate is obliged to be examined in the whole circle of the sciences by three masters of arts, *of his own choice*. The examination is to be held in one of the public schools, and to continue from nine o'clock till eleven. The masters take a most solemn oath, that they will examine properly and impartially. Dreadful as all
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this appears, there is always found to be more of appearance in it than reality ; for the greatest dunce usually gets his *testimonium* signed with as much ease and credit as the finest genius. The manner of proceeding is as follows : The poor young man to be examined in the sciences often knows no more of them than his bedmaker, and the masters who examine are sometimes equally unacquainted with such mysteries. But *schemes*, as they are called, or little books, containing forty or fifty questions in each science, are handed down, from age to age, from one to another. The candidate to be examined employs three or four days in learning these by heart, and the examiners, having done the same before him when they were examined, know what questions to ask ; and so all goes on smoothly. When the candidate has displayed his universal knowledge of the sciences, he is to display his skill in philology. One of the masters, therefore, desires him to construe a passage in some Greek or Latin classic, which he does with no interruption, just as he pleases, and as well as he can. The statutes next require, that he should translate familiar English phrases into Latin. And now is the time when the masters shew their wit and jocularity. Droll questions are put on any subject, and the puzzled candidate furnishes diversion by his awkward embarrassment. I have known the questions on this occasion to consist of an enquiry into the pedigree of a race-horse. And it is a common question, after asking what is the *summum bonum* of various sects of philosophers, to ask what is the *summum bonum*, or chief good, among Oxonians ; to which the answer is such as Mimnermus would give. This familiarity, however, only takes place when the examiners are pot-companions of the candidate, which indeed is usually the case ; for it is reckoned good management to get acquainted with two or three jolly young masters of arts, and supply them well with port, previously to the examination. If the vice-chancellor and proctors happen to enter the school, a very uncommon event, then a little solemnity is put on, very much to the confusion of the masters, as well as of the boy, who is sitting in the little box opposite to them. As neither the officer, nor any one else, usually enters the room (for it is reckoned

koned very *ungenteel*), the examiners and the candidates often converse on the last drinking-bout, or on horses, or read the newspaper, or a novel, or divert themselves as well as they can in any manner, till the clock strikes eleven, when all parties descend, and the *testimonium* is signed by the masters. With this *testimonium* in his possession, the candidate is sure of success. The day in which the honour is to be conferred arrives; he appears in the Convocation house, he takes an abundance of oaths, pays a sum of money in fees, and, after kneeling down before the vice-chancellor, and whispering a lie, rises up a Bachelor of Arts.

And now, if he aspires at higher honours (and what emulous spirit can sit down without aspiring at them?) new labours and new difficulties are to be encountered during the space of three years. He must *determine* in Lent, he must *do quodlibets*, he must *do austins*, he must declaim twice, he must read six solemn lectures, and he must be again examined in the sciences, before he can be promoted to the degree of Master of Arts.

None but the initiated can know what *determining*, *doing quodlibets*, and *doing austins* mean. I have not room to enter into a minute description of such contemptible *minutiæ*. Let it be sufficient to say, that these exercises consist of disputations, and the disputations of syllogisms, procured and uttered nearly in the same places, time, and manner, as we have already seen them in *doing generals*. There is, however, a great deal of trouble in little formalities, such as procuring six-penny *liceats*, sticking up the names on the walls, sitting in large empty rooms by yourself, or with some poor wight as ill employed as yourself, without any thing to say or do, wearing hoods, and a little piece of lambskin with the wool on it, and a variety of other particulars too tedious and too trifling to enumerate.

The declamations would be an useful exercise, if it were not always performed in a careless and evasive manner. The lectures are always called *Wall Lectures*, because the lecturer has no other audience but the walls. Indeed, he usually steals a sheet or two of Latin out of some old book, no matter on what subject, though it ought to be on natural philosophy.

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These he keeps in his pocket, in order to take them out and read away, if a proctor should come in; but, otherwise, he sits by himself, and solaces himself with a book, not from the Bodleian but the circulating library.

The examination is performed exactly in the same manner as before described; and, though represented as very formidable, is such an one as a boy from a good school just entered, might go through as well as after a seven years residence. Few however reside; for the majority are what are called *term-trotters*, that is, persons who only keep the terms for form-sake, or spend six or eight weeks in a year in the university, to qualify them for degrees, according to the letter of the statutes.

After all these important exercises and trials, and after again taking oaths by wholesale, and paying the fees, the academic is honoured with a Master's degree, and sallies forth into the world with this undeniable passport to carry him through it with credit.

Exercises of a nature equally silly and obsolete, are performed, in a similar manner, for the other degrees; but I have neither time nor patience to enter into the detail.

And now I seriously repeat, that what I have said proceeds from no other motive than a wish to see the glory of the universities unsullied by the disgrace of requiring, with ridiculous solemnity, a set of childish and useless exercises. They raise no emulation, they confer no honour, they promote no improvement. They give a great deal of trouble, they waste much time, and they render the university contemptible to its own members. I have the honour, such as it is, to be a member of the university of Oxford, and a master of arts in it. I know the advantages of the place; but I also know its more numerous and weighty disadvantages; and the confidence the public has already placed in me, makes it a duty to inform them of every thing, in which the general state of morals and literature is greatly concerned. I have done this duty; nor shall I regard the unjust displeasure of all the doctors, both the proctors, nor of all the heads of colleges and halls, with their respective societies.

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“As to the imprudence of this undertaking,” to use the words of an able but unfortunate writer, “I confess it to be such, and that I have all along proceeded without a single view to my own interest, without any promise or expectation of the smallest reward, even that of being presented to a Doctor’s degree by the university, in return for all my industry, and the pains which I have taken in its behalf.

“The worldly wise, and the prudent of this generation, consider things only as they respect their temporal interest and advantage, without any regard to right or wrong, truth or falsehood, any further than they conduce to their corrupt purposes and selfish aims. But it is the part of a scholar and an honest man to consider things intrinsically, and to make truth, reason, and equity, the standards of all his determinations.”

NO. LXXVIII. ON THE FEAR OF GROWING OLD.

AMONG the various follies, by which we encrease the natural and unavoidable miseries of life, is the dread of approaching age. The sight of a grey hair has often caused a feverer pang than the loss of a child or a husband. After a certain age, every returning birth-day is saluted with silent sorrow, and we conceal the number of our years with as much solicitude as the consciousness of an atrocious crime.

This weakness arises, in great measure, from a defective education. They who have never been taught to consider any thing valuable but youth, beauty, and dissipating pleasure, will naturally feel themselves reduced to a state of despondency, when they behold all, for which life appears worth possessing, on the eve of departure. That middle age, at which all the powers of the mind and body are in complete perfection, is loathed as if it were the age of decrepitude. The boundaries of life, by nature sufficiently circumscribed, are still farther con-

tracted by the empty votary of fashion, and from three-score and ten it shrinks to thirty. It has been currently reported, that many fashionable beauties have expressed a devout wish, that they might not survive their thirtieth birth-day. To sink in the horizon of the gay world, and to see other suns soaring in all the glorious majesty of youth and beauty, was more than they imagined their delicate natures could possibly sustain.

But as life is sweet, and death not always exorable, they and their many imitators will probably be inclined to live on, even when they are arrived at the formidable age of thrice ten years. It will then be but common charity to endeavour to convince them, that there are methods, which may render the long and dismal period which is to follow, not only comfortable to themselves, but agreeable to others. They will not any longer be under the necessity of dressing at sixty in the garb of sixteen, nor of painting and patching a shrivelled skin, nor of spending that time at the looking-glass, which should be devoted to the mirror and the beauty of holiness.

For the enjoyment of the space from thirty to three-score, it will be necessary to have laid in a stock of good humour. But the temper must be cultivated at an early age, in order to be cultivated with success. The years from eight to eighteen must not be exclusively devoted to external ornament, and the arts of catching admiration. Many efforts must be made during this period to overcome spite, envy, peevishness, stubbornness, sullenness, and all those ugly qualities, which, though they may lie dormant while youth and beauty secure submission, will afterwards break out in all the fulness of their horrors, when flattery is silent, and admiration no more. But good humour will rise to supply the charms of departed beauty; and good sense, properly improved, will leave no part of life without the means of pleasing and receiving pleasure.

But there is no method of inspiring good humour and good sense so effectual, as that of forming a taste for polite letters and polite arts at an early age. Whatever pleases habitually, equably, and innocently, cannot fail to sweeten the temper. Books, besides that they are usually addressed to the taste, and on that ac-

count possess a beneficial influence on the temper, abound with maxims and with precepts of sovereign efficacy in the improvement of the heart, the temper, and the understanding. Drawing and music, seriously and attentively pursued, are peculiarly efficacious in refining, exalting, and sweetening the disposition. Every thing, indeed, which addresses itself to the finer faculties of the human constitution, has, in some degree, this valuable effect; and she, who has been early taught to value the beauties of the mind, will find its graces expanding to their highest perfection, at the very age in which the blossoms of personal beauty wither and decay.

If, as we grow old, we grow wiser and better, surely we shall have no reason to repine, since our real happiness is always proportioned to our wisdom and our goodness; and we can scarcely avoid growing wiser and better by age, if our minds have been early improved with learning, and duly tinctured with virtue and religion. Time and experience naturally lead to improvement; and, if our hearts are rightly disposed, we shall find, in the conscious improvement of our minds and morals, one of the sweetest pleasures of which our nature is capable.

However unreasonable the excessive dread of approaching old age, in either sex, it is certainly more excusable, on many accounts, in women than in men. In men it is a mark of weakness, want of principle, and want of sense. Yet how many do we daily see with wrinkled brows and bloodless cheeks, and tottering legs and hoary locks, decorating their walking skeletons with every cosmetic art, and haunting every scene of vice and vanity, with all the wantonness of a stripling of eighteen! There is a natural dignity, authority, and beauty, in old age honourably supported, which such men resign for that absurd affectation of youth, which can only render them wretched and ridiculous.

To consider the advanced periods of life as of no value, argues a great defect of religious principle. They constitute the proper season for the pleasures of devotion and of practical piety. They furnish a most

desirable opportunity for advancing our nature to all attainable perfection, and fulfilling the purposes of our existence by benevolence and beneficence. They enable us to aspire after, and to obtain, that beauty which shall not pass away, and that youth which shall be immortal.

NO. LXXIX. CURSORY CONSIDERATIONS ON
ARCHITECTURE.

THE origin of building was but little posterior to the origin of mankind. Man, naked and defenceless as he came from the hand of nature, soon found it necessary to shelter himself from the inclemency of the weather, from the attacks of wild beasts, and from the invasion of his savage neighbours. He could not lie down to sleep with security till he had formed a hut, which, however rude and inartificial, might serve the purposes of shelter and defence. If his own wants and natural ingenuity were not sufficient to instruct him how to build, he might learn from the irrational creation. The swallow's nest, and the bee's hive, suggested hints which he might adopt and improve; but this original species of building, directed by no rules, and destitute of elegance and proportion, cannot properly be said to be the work of art, or to merit the appellation of Architecture. It was, however, the embryo of those noble edifices which have since adorned all civilized countries.

To the first great works of Architecture, Ægypt, ever fertile in the productions of art as well as of nature, is recorded to have given rise. Several of them are extant at this day, and are too generally known to admit of reiterated description. They excite those ideas which arise from magnificence of design, not from delicacy of execution; and they rather astonish by their grandeur, than please by their elegance.

But the taste for works of useless bulk and unwieldy magnitude could not long prevail. Some adequate end was required to justify labour and expence. It is natural

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to suppose, and the event has verified the conjecture, that some of the earliest efforts of the art would be devoted to religion. The pyramids of Ægypt are indeed, with great probability, supposed by Mr. Bryant to have been temples. The magnificence of the temple was well adapted to excite sublime ideas of the Deity; and it seems to have been an early received opinion, that the greatest human skill and industry could not be more properly exerted, than to display the glory of Omnipotence.

From the temples of the gods, to palaces and public edifices, designed for general debate, and for judicial and legislative transactions, the transition was easy and gradual. Even in the dwellings of private persons, the art was displayed with minute elegance as well as magnificent splendour. As wealth accumulated, and the arts improved, it was natural to add to the original objects of building, which were convenience and safety, some degree of ornament. When the few wants of nature are satisfied, and the dangers of a savage state removed, the restless mind of man creates artificial objects of desire. No sooner are the cravings of necessity silenced, than the calls of imagination gain attention. Taste becomes importunate when the animal appetites are at rest. At an advanced period of society, it was not enough that the habitation was large, strong, and durable: it was now required to be not only safe and commodious, but ornamental. All men of liberal and elegant minds, whose education, genius, and possessions, enabled them either to design or execute, soon devoted themselves to the study of that symmetry, and form of beauty, which excites pleasing sensations in the mind of man.

Persons of this turn, and under circumstances favourable to its exertion, were, however, in the early ages, but thinly scattered on the face of the globe. A just taste in Architecture was confined, at one time, to the comparatively small country of ancient Greece. The greater part of mankind continued long in a state of barbarism, and consequent insecurity, most unfavourable to the progress of elegance and refinement: but the inhabitants of antient Greece, formed, perhaps, by the partial hand of nature with feelings peculiarly susceptible

susceptible of every kind of beauty, very early advanced the art of building to a degree of perfection, which the united intellects of all the civilized world have not since been able to surpass. Men have, indeed, sometimes ventured, from motives of vanity or caprice, to deviate from these models; but have commonly returned to them soon, with a clear conviction of having lost sight of excellence in the pursuit of unnecessary innovation.

Perfection has commonly followed invention at a long interval; and the best productions of art have seldom been universally, and without exception, well received: but the orders of Architecture, invented by the Greeks, have never admitted real improvement by alteration, nor have they yet been beheld with disgust, or disapprobation, by a single individual. Fanciful changes, in the capital of a column, or in trifling embellishments, have, indeed, frequently been adopted; but though they might please the vanity of the artist, and be applauded by his partial admirers, yet have they seldom given satisfaction to the majority of spectators. Ignorance and dulness may have viewed the Grecian Architecture with an indifference easily accounted for; but every sensible mind, though unacquainted with rules, and free from favourable prepossessions, feels itself involuntarily soothed and elevated by the contemplation of it. Profusion of ornament, and complicated vastness, have never yet been found able to cause that effect which is produced by *simple magnificence*. What is said of the Grecian Architecture, is to be extended to those additions which the Romans made, so similar to the primitive productions of Greece, that I do not separate them as constituting different styles, but class them, for the sake of simplicity, under one denomination.

Such then is the general characteristic of Grecian Architecture, which, though it originally displayed that kind of beauty which seems, from the universality of its influence, congenial to the human mind, has been, at various times, lost by disuse, corrupted by vicious taste, and mutilated by ignorance. To trace it
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in the progress of its revolutions, and to treat with technical accuracy of the dimensions and particular modes of alteration, would be to invade the province of the architect and historian. It were to enter upon a detail jejune and uninteresting. I pretend not presumptuously to compose a didactic treatise, or an historical dissertation on the subject, but merely to express the feelings of an elegant, though common spectator.

During that period of literary darkness which overspread all the nations of Europe, the antient arts, from their intimate connection with antient learning, seem to have been involved in the general obscurity. Still, however, edifices for religious, for civil, for domestic purposes, were necessary; and the human mind, active even under disadvantageous circumstances, invented modes of Architecture, of which there existed no antient model in Greece or Rome. Of these, the learned antiquary is able to discriminate the specific differences, and to point out with accuracy the Gothic, the Saracen, and other styles, with all their temporary modifications. The general spectator, however, includes them all under the name of Gothic Architecture; and, indeed, the great resemblance between them in many of their most striking features, and the common notions on the subject, in some measure justify the considering them as of the same tribe, accidentally diversified by that analogous irregularity, if we may so express it, which is often visible in the works of art as well as of nature.

The many venerable monuments which remain in our own country, to testify the magnificence of our ancestors, enable every one to form an idea of the Gothic style from actual observation: and it must be confessed, that they bear evident marks of great skill, great labour, and great expence. Taste, since the builders of those times made little pretension to what is called a pure taste, and had few opportunities for its improvement, is not to be looked for in their works, and will, indeed, seldom be found. To the perfection of a building, they seem at one time to have thought it necessary to exhibit the appearance of great manual labour in little decorations, and to dazzle the eye with gilding, sculpture, paint, and finery; a style which

is called the *florid*, by those writers who have undertaken to discriminate with accuracy the various species of Gothic Architecture. That any part could be great from its simplicity, and beautiful from its want of ornament, our ancestors had little apprehension. They had neither the models of antiquity before their eyes, nor the treatises of those philosophers at hand, who have investigated the true causes of beauty and sublimity. No wonder, therefore, that the mason and the mechanic were suffered to display their dexterity in fanciful and capricious exertions. Difficulty of execution, and the appearance of uncommon labour, were often the only criterions of excellence with the spectator, as well as with the artist, at a time when neither of them had opportunities of cultivating a refined taste, or of forming a solid judgment, either by precept or by example.

But the modern-spectator has unavoidably become familiar with the Greek model, and, without any great effort, if he is not deficient in natural taste, acquires rules of judging of the fine arts, according to truth and simplicity. On entering the Gothic abbey, or the hall, he is, indeed, struck with ideas of solemnity, and is conscious of a gloomy grandeur. The fretted roof, the long-drawn aile, the pointed arch, and the dim twilight from the narrow window, excite a species of emotions peculiarly adapted to the purposes of the cathedral. Perhaps, however, the air of antiquity, which the Gothic piles of building have by this time acquired, has, at least, an equal share in producing this effect on the observer. When he views the abbey merely as a work of Architecture, without admitting religious or historical associations, and without indulging the prejudices of the antiquary, perhaps he no longer feels himself affected with surprise, or particularly disposed to devotion. When he looks up without prejudice, he owns, that however extensive the area, and vast the structure, his attention is drawn off from contemplating the grandeur of the whole, by a *profusion of little ornaments*, whose angles offend the eye, and which destroy the unity of the object. A great multiplicity of ideas cannot severally make a due impression,

impression, and produce a proper effect, when they operate in conjunction. While we survey the complicated parts, we neglect the whole; and while we attend to the whole, by abstracting the parts, which is neither an easy nor an agreeable effort, those lavish ornaments, of which the complicated parts consist, become indifferent or disgusting, because useless, superfluous, and cumbersome. Instead of causing agreeable sensations, which ought to be a subordinate object in every building for public use, such edifices are found to raise ideas, in some degree painful, from the distraction of mind which they occasion. Meanness is often the result where sublimity was expected, and littleness appears even in the midst of grandeur.

Gothic Architecture is often found disgusting at present, from a disproportion or inconsistency, which, perhaps, originally pleased. A long and slender pillar sometimes apparently supports a weight, which seems too great for it to bear. This want of symmetry renders an object highly deformed, which probably, by the appearance of extraordinary skill, delighted our ancestors. The pointed arch, which, because we have always seen it used in buildings venerable for age and sanctity, we have learned to think peculiarly solemn, is certainly in itself unpleasing and improper. The awkward angle, in the vertex, stops the rapid course of the eye, which loves to pursue the line of a circle, or semicircle, without obstruction. Nor let the satisfaction, which is sometimes experienced from a view of it, be thought an unanswerable objection to the general justness of this remark: for pleasing ideas, associated with objects unpleasing, will often communicate their agreeable tinge by approximation, and render even deformity no longer ungraceful. A view of the Gothic arch, in the antique pile raised by our progenitors, calls to remembrance the generations that have preceded us, renews the idea of some historical fact or celebrated personage, or suggests reflections on the piety, the zeal, the comparative ingenuity of our forefathers; and, on the whole, raises thoughts pleasingly awful on the sanctity of the *time-honoured* edifice. All, or any of these arbitrary associations, will give an agreeable air to an object,

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ject, which might otherwise be contemplated with indifference or disgust.

The painted window, a striking ornament of our ancient edifices, exhibits a specimen, by which we may form a judgment of the general turn of that taste which dictated every other decoration. Glaring colours, rendered still more glaring by transparency, seem to have constituted, in the idea of those who lived a century or two ago, the perfection of beauty. Accordingly, they viewed with a pleasure, uncontrolled by the chaste notions of modern elegance, the gaudy shrine, the glittering altar, the painted monument, and the emblazoned cieling. Exactness of representation, and a faithful adherence to nature and propriety, were indeed wanting; but their place was amply supplied, in the ideas of the dark ages, by the glare of dazzling splendour. Perhaps, it may be justly questioned, whether the genuine graces of unadorned nature were at all pleasing to eyes accustomed to admire all that was laborious and artificial. The Medicean Venus would probably have had few charms till dressed like the lady of Loretto. The meretricious staining of the glass, was commonly preferred to the chaste colouring of the canvas. Such, indeed, is the general preference where refinement is unknown; and there is no doubt, but that an Indian would set a higher value on the Dutch toy that glitters, and awkwardly imitates the human shape than on the statue of a Phidias, or on the painting of an Apelles. No wonder that our ancestors, at a period when they neither studied nature nor the ancients, displayed in their works of art the characteristic grossness of barbarism. Finery strikes immediately on the perceptive faculties, and a very considerable degree of civilization must have taken place, before the first strong decision of the senses can be superseded by the dictates of a critical delicacy.

The parts of a building, which add to its strength, ought, whenever it is practicable, to contribute to its beauty. The vast buttresses of the Gothic Architecture, supposing that they were necessary to support, which however they were not always, are seldom thought at present to conduce to ornament: but that they were
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often intended to adorn, we may conclude from their being applied, where, as supports, they are superfluous. And indeed, considered in this light, they are perfectly consistent with that general taste, which seems to have delighted in supernumerary appendages, provided they conveyed the idea of great labour or difficulty. In the castle, and the fortified wall, they are, indeed, always admitted with good effect, because they add to the appearance of security as well as to real strength; but in edifices, consecrated to religion and the arts of peace, they occasion that disgust to true taste, which results from the misapplication of supports and embellishments. Nor are they of themselves in the least beautiful. They want the rotundity of the column, and the uprightness of the pilaster, and abound with unpleasing angles.

The internal supports are often no less heavy and inelegant. Even where there appears a great resemblance to Grecian Architecture, we find no vestiges of Grecian grace. The pillars are preposterously thick, and want the due height to render them pleasing to the eye. The bases, the shafts, and the capitals, are joined together without symmetry, and seem not to have been considered by the artists as forming one whole, which, when proportionate, constitutes an object that never yet failed to please. Most of the artists, it is probable, knew not, in an unenlightened age, the difference between the Orders; and by blending them capriciously together, or by omitting some of their essential parts, formed indeed a column, not quite unlike the Grecian, but too much disguised and deformed to be recognized among the orders of antiquity. The ornaments of the capitals are whimsical and ugly. The architrave, the frieze, and the cornice, are preserved in a mutilated, fantastic, and irregular form. Under these disadvantages, what little there is of the Grecian Architecture yields in beauty to the Gothic, when the Gothic appears in its best style, genuine and unmixed. The mixture of the two styles in the same building, which is not uncommon, never has a good effect; since the Gothic spoils the uniformity of the Grecian, and

the Grecian renders the Gothic more conspicuously inelegant by the contrast of its own beauty.

The darkness, remarkable in religious buildings of this style, has been admired as an excellence. It is said to throw the mind into that serious temper, which is peculiarly adapted to the indulgence of devotion. Such an effect it may perhaps produce, in a great degree, on minds subject to superstition and fanaticism, or strongly influenced by a warm imagination; yet, why light, one of the most glorious works of creation, should refrigerate the ardour of religion in the rational and dispassionate professor of it, no good reason can be assigned. The imaginations of all men are, however, affected by very trivial causes; and he knows little of human nature, who knows not the power of the imagination over the strongest understanding: but it is the business of philosophy to assert the empire of reason over fancy. A religious dimness may, perhaps, be deemed necessary by the bigoted inhabitants of the convent and the cloister, whose minds, it is to be feared, are often as dark as their habitations: but light is cheerful, and cheerfulness is the disposition of innocence. If guilt is to be taught to feel contrition by the gloominess of the temple, it is to be presumed, that the pious sorrow will be as transient as the emotion which caused it, and which, like other productions of the fancy, must be of short continuance. That our predecessors had no such end in view we may conclude, because the small contracted window is not appropriated to the church, but as often observed in the Gothic hall, palace, and private dwelling. We may fairly infer, that the fashion took its rise from a defect in taste and judgment, not from a conviction of its peculiar propriety in religious houses; or, perhaps, the aperture was made small, because glass was scarce in the early ages, and a large opening admitted the inclemency of the weather; but, whatever was the cause, one is almost tempted to say, that it was a proof of uncommon narrowness of mind, to be sparing of that light which the Author of nature has bestowed with a liberality almost as unbounded as his power.

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But, in truth, while we censure the contracted taste, we must applaud the enlarged benevolence and unaffected piety of our forefathers. The numerous buildings which they consecrated to learning, however uncouth their appearance, have afforded retreats and opportunities of improvement to men, who have been at once the ornaments of our nation, and of mankind. Nor were the alms-house, and the hospital, less capable of administering comfort and relief to the needy and infirm, because built with little grace or symmetry: and the pious heart has poured forth its animated devotion at the rude Gothic shrine, with a fervour not to be surpassed in the Grecian temple. The taste of our ancestors is, indeed, no longer a pattern for our own: but their beneficent virtues will for ever continue proper objects of imitation.

The revival of antient literature was soon followed by the revival of true taste. The latter was a natural consequence of the former. By an acquaintance with books, the mind was opened, the views enlarged, and curiosity excited. Travelling into foreign countries for the purposes of improvement, as well as of war and commerce, became a general practice, and was facilitated by the liberal spirit of enquiry, which began universally to prevail. Our artists no sooner saw the Grecian and Roman remains of Architecture, than they caught the idea of beauty, which they realized at their return. The new style of building, as the antient, at its revival after lying dormant many ages, might be called, was immediately compared with that which then prevailed, and was preferred to it with intuitive discernment. It wanted only to be seen, to be admired and adopted.

And, indeed, its beauties are of so peculiar a kind, as to strike and please even the uncultivated mind. Like the fabric of the universe, it derives much of its grandeur from its simplicity. Its ornaments are chaste, elegant, captivating, and never superfluous. They are purposely contrived to wear the appearance of utility, and often really contribute to support as well as to adorn. Many of the most essential parts are, from their
shape

shape and proportion, as beautiful as those specifically termed ornamental. The column of each order, with all its appendages, and the semi-circular, or elliptical arch, without a pointed vertex, seem to have something inherent in the form of them capable of giving pleasure to the mind, previously to the direction of rules, and the disquisitions of criticism.

The passion for novelty and singularity is, however, often found to prefer the new and uncommon, even to allowed and established excellence: and for the gratification of this inborn avidity of human nature, absurdities, long exploded and relinquished, are often revived, and fanciful and monstrous innovations introduced. It is not therefore surprising, however culpable, that, in opposition to the general taste of mankind, many still admire and labour to restore the Gothic Architecture; or that, tired of Grecian beauty, they endeavour to import, into northern climates, a style which they call oriental, but which is often mixed and modified with their own grotesque or puerile inventions. Ingenuity of design, skill in execution, and rarity of appearance, may cause even buildings of this fantastic form to excite a transient pleasure among the curious, or the uninformed; but it is to be hoped, that the general depravity of taste, which can render them objects of general approbation, will not soon take place. What were this, but a preference of darkness to light, of deformity to beauty, of barbarism to refinement?

Of a revolution so fatal to the fine arts, there is indeed little danger. The standard of taste, that great desideratum in many of the works of human ingenuity, seems to be discovered and established in Architecture. The caprice of a few individuals cannot alter it. Nor is it likely to be lost, till the same darkness, which once overspread antient Greece and Rome, shall involve all modern Europe; an event too improbable to be apprehended, but by the visionary.

To please the eye has, in later times, become a collateral object in the building designed for private habitation, as it ever was in erecting the palace, the senate-house, and the temple: and though the modern methods

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of multiplying the works of original artists by substituting stucco for stone, by casting in moulds the ornaments which were wont to be wrought by the chisel, and by using gilding for real gold, have rendered the Grecian style, and a style of splendour, common in buildings intended for mean purposes; yet, however misplaced and prostituted, the Grecian style still retains intrinsic beauty, and ought not to be the less esteemed, when it is displayed in its proper place by the ingenious architect.

With many such, and their judicious admirers, this nation is and has been honoured. It were easy to name those who would adorn the schools of Greece, and of antient and modern Italy; but it is totally unnecessary. Their sagacious fellow-citizens have marked their merit; and their own works will be a monument of their fame to late posterity.

By the efforts of these artists, conducted according to the most graceful taste, the face of our country is daily acquiring new beauty. Grace without use and solidity is, indeed, of little permanent value; but, when united with these, it commands, by deserving, universal applause and esteem. While, in the present age, we behold numerous and beautiful edifices arising on all sides, devoted to the purposes of religion, of benevolence, of learning, and of liberal enjoyment, we may justly congratulate our own nation, that the happy art is discovered and practised, of combining elegance with convenience, and rendering ornament conducive to accommodation, and accommodation to ornament.

No. LXXX. A SHORT SYSTEM OF VIRTUE
AND HAPPINESS.

I WILL suppose a virtuous young man forming in his mind the principles of his future conduct, and uttering the result of his reflections in the following soliloquy:

“ At the age when I arrive at maturity of reason, I perceive myself placed in a world abounding with external objects; and I also perceive within me powers and passions formed to be powerfully excited and affected with them. I am naturally tempted to interrogate myself, what am I? whence came I? and whither am I going?

“ With a view to satisfy my own enquiries, I consider others who appear to be just like myself; I listen to the instruction of those who have obtained a reputation for wisdom; and I examine, with serious attention, the volumes in which are written the words of the wise.

“ The result of the whole enquiry is a sincere conviction, that I am placed here to perform many duties, that I originate from a supreme Creator, and that I am going on in the journey of life, to accomplish some of his gracious purposes at the close of it, as well as in its progress.

“ I divide my duty into three parts, according to the suggestions of my own reason, and the instruction of books. They consist of the obligations which I owe to myself, to others, and to Him, in whose hands are both they and I, the great Lord of the universe.

“ With respect to myself, as I consist of two parts, a body and a mind, my duty to myself again separates itself into two correspondent subdivisions. My body is a machine curiously organized, and easily de-

“ ranged by excess and irregularity. When disturbed in
“ its œconomy, it subjects me to pain, and disables me
“ from all necessary and pleasant exertion. I owe it
“ therefore to myself, to taste the cup, and partake the
“ banquet, and gratify my senses, no further than those
“ limits which are obviously prescribed by reason and
“ experience. I further learn from the religion of my
“ country, that my body is the temple of the holy
“ spirit. To pollute it with presumptuous transgression
“ cannot but be blasphemy; to devote myself to
“ gluttony, drunkenness, and debauchery, is at once
“ to deaden the growing energies of spiritual life, and
“ to weaken and destroy the subordinate yet necessary
“ parts of me, my animal and material fabric; it is to
“ shorten life, and to disable me from performing its
“ duties while it continues.

“ But I have a mind also capable of rising to high
“ improvements by culture, and of sinking to a brutal
“ stupidity by neglect. I will make use of all the
“ advantages of education. I will devote my hours of
“ leisure to reading and reflection. Elegant letters,
“ as well as useful science, shall claim my attention;
“ for all that tends to polish the mind, tends also to
“ sweeten the temper, and to mitigate the remains of
“ natural ferocity.

“ My mind, as well as my body, is greatly concerned
“ in avoiding intemperance. Eating to excess
“ clouds its brightness, blunts its edge, and, as it
“ were, drags it down to all the grossness of materiality.
“ Intemperate drinking not only reduces it
“ at the time of its immediate influence to a state of
“ brutality, but gradually destroys all its vigour. The
“ sensual indulgences in general, when they are in-
“ ordinate and excessive, debase, corrupt, and brutalize.
“ Their delights are transient, and their pains severe and
“ of long duration.

“ Instead then of running into the danger of temptation
“ during the ardour of my youth, I will fly from
“ the conflict, in which my own passions are sure to fight
“ against, and will probably betray me to the enemy.
“ I see, indeed, thousands pursuing pleasure; and pro-
“ fessing

“ felling to have found it in perfection in the haunts of
“ debauchery. But I see them but for a little while.
“ Like the silly insect that flutters with delight around
“ the taper, they soon receive some fatal injury in their
“ minds, their persons, or their fortunes, and drop in
“ irrecoverable ruin. Alas! I am too much inclined
“ to vice, from the depravity of my nature, and the
“ violence of my passions. I will not add fuel to
“ the fire, nor increase the violence of that natural
“ tempest within me, which of itself is sufficient for
“ my destruction.

“ But, at the same time, I will not be a cynic. The
“ world abounds with innocent enjoyments. The kind
“ God of nature intended that I should taste them. —
“ But moderation is essential to true pleasure. My own
“ experience, and the experience of mankind from their
“ origin, has declared, that whenever pleasure exceeds
“ the bounds of moderation, it is not only highly in-
“ jurious, but disgustful. In order to enjoy pleasure,
“ I see the necessity of pursuing some business with at-
“ tention. The vicissitude is necessary to excite an ap-
“ petite and give a relish. Nay, the very performance
“ of business with skill and success, is attended with a
“ delightful satisfaction, which few boasted pleasures
“ are able to confer.

“ While I take care of myself, of my health, of my
“ improvement in morals and understanding, I will
“ not harbour pride, or look down with supercilious-
“ ness or ill-nature on those who live, as it were, at
“ random, and who acknowledge no other guide of
“ their conduct, but the sudden impulse of a tempo-
“ rary inclination. With all my improvements and
“ endeavours, I shall still feel imperfections enough
“ to humble me. Candour and humility are some
“ of the least fallible marks of sound sense and sincere
“ virtue. I shall have sufficient employment in cor-
“ recting myself; nor shall I presume to censure others,
“ unless my profession or relative situation renders it
“ my duty.

“ My duty to myself is, indeed, intimately connected
“ with my duty to others. By preserving the faculties

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“ of my mind and body, and by improving them to
“ the utmost, I am enabled to exert them with effect in
“ the service of society.

“ I am connected with others by the ties of con-
“ sanguinity and friendship, and by the common bond
“ of partaking in the same humanity. As a son, I
“ shall be tender and dutiful; as a brother, uniformly
“ affectionate; as a husband, faithful and friendly; as
“ a father, kind and provident; as a man, benevo-
“ lent to men in whatever circumstances, and however
“ separated from me by country, religion, or govern-
“ ment.

“ But universal benevolence must not be an inac-
“ tive principle. If it proceed not to real benefi-
“ cence, I fear it will have more in it of ostentation
“ than of sincerity. I will then prove its sincerity
“ by doing good, and removing evil of every kind, as
“ far as my abilities allow me, and my influence ex-
“ tends.

“ But before I pretend to generosity, I will be
“ strictly just. Truth shall regulate my words, and
“ equity my actions. If I am engaged in a profes-
“ sion, I will do the duties of it; if in merchandize,
“ I will take no advantage of the ignorant, nor de-
“ base my character, nor wound my conscience, for
“ the sake of lucre. In all my intercourse with so-
“ ciety, I will recollect that heavenly precept of doing
“ to others as I wish they should to me, and will en-
“ deavour to obey it. I may, I certainly shall of-
“ fend from the violence of my passions, the weakness
“ of my judgment, the perverseness of my will, and
“ from mistake and misapprehension. But while I keep
“ the evangelical rule in view, and sincerely labour to
“ conform to it, I shall seldom commit such offences
“ against others, as will be either permanently or
“ deeply injurious.

“ With respect to my duty to my Creator, I derive
“ an argument in favour of religion, from the feelings
“ of my own bosom, superior to the most elaborate
“ subtilties of human ingenuity. In the hour of dis-
“ tress, my heart as naturally flies for succour to the
“ Deity.

“ Deity, as when hungry and thirsty I seek food and
“ water! or when weary, repose. In religion I look
“ for comfort, and in religion I always find it. Devotion
“ supplies me with a pure and exalted pleasure. It
“ elevates my soul, and teaches me to look down with
“ a proper contempt upon many objects which are
“ eagerly sought, but which end in misery. In this
“ respect, and in many others, it effects, in the best and
“ most compendious method, what has been in vain
“ pretended to by proud philosophy.

“ And in selecting a mode or peculiar system of religion, I shall consider what that was, in which my
“ father lived and died. I find it to have been the religion of Christ. I examine it with reverence. I encounter many difficulties; but, at the same time, I
“ feel within me an internal evidence, which, uniting
“ its force with the external, forbids me to disbelieve.
“ When involuntary doubts arise, I immediately silence
“ their importunity by recollecting the weakness of my
“ judgment, and the vain presumption of hastily deciding on the most important of all subjects, against such
“ powerful evidence, and against the major part of the
“ civilized world.

“ I will learn humility of the humble Jesus, and
“ gratefully accept the beneficial doctrines and glorious offers, which his benign religion reaches
“ out to all, who sincerely seek them by prayer and
“ penitence.

“ In vain shall the conceited philosophers, whom
“ fashion and ignorance admire, attempt to weaken
“ my belief, or undermine the principles of my morality. Without their aid, I can be sufficiently
“ wicked, and sufficiently miserable. Human life
“ abounds with evil. I will seek balsams for the
“ wounds of the heart in the sweets of innocence, and
“ in the consolations of religion. Virtue, I am convinced, is the noblest ornament of humanity, and
“ the source of the sublimest and the sweetest pleasure;
“ and piety leads to that peace, which the world, and
“ all that it possesses, cannot bestow. Let others enjoy
“ the pride and pleasure of being called philosophers,
“ deists,

“ deists, sceptics ; be mine the real, unostentatious qualities of the honest, humble, and charitable Christian. When the gaudy glories of fashion and of vain philosophy shall have withered like a short-lived flower, sincere piety and moral honesty shall flourish as the cedar of Lebanon.

“ But I repress my triumphs. After all my improvements, and all my pantings for perfect on, I shall still be greatly defective. Therefore, to whatever degree of excellence I advance, let me never forget to shew to others that indulgence, which my infirmities, my errors, and my voluntary misconduct, will require both from them and from mine, and their Almighty and most merciful Father.”

NO. LXXXI. ON THE PECULIAR PROPRIETY
OF EXCITING PERSONAL MERIT AND MANLY
VIRTUE, IN A TIME OF PUBLIC DISTRESS
AND DIFFICULTY.

THE dignity and rational happiness of human nature are always proportionate to its real improvements. Moral instruction can never be superfluous or unseasonable ; for human virtue, like the stone of Sisyphus, has a continual tendency to roll down the hill, and requires to be forced up again by the never-ceasing efforts of succeeding moralists.

But with respect to the influence of virtue on the prosperity of a state ; it is certain, that emergencies arise, when extraordinary degrees of it, throughout the whole body of the people, are peculiarly necessary. National adversity, like adversity in private life, prohibits the indulgence of a supine indolence, and calls for the most energetic activity. Virtues which have lain dormant, like arms in the arsenal, during the soft season of peace and plenty, must be brought forth to be, as it were, brightened and sharpened in the day of distress. And
perhaps

perhaps no time could demand them more loudly than when the nation was at once engaged in war with four different and formidable powers, and divided at home by violent dissensions.

The strength of empire consists in the spirit of its members, and not altogether in its possessions and pecuniary resources. But how is that spirit to be roused or properly directed? The understanding must be enlightened, the ideas elevated, the heart enlarged. Ignorance, avarice, and luxury, render men indifferent under what form of government, or in what state of society they live. They superinduce a weakness and a meanness, which, for the sake of gratification or interest, rejoices to submit to the sceptre of absolute power.

Liberty, without which we might almost venture to repine at our existence as an useless and a baneful gift of God, cannot be understood or valued, and consequently will not be duly supported, without a competent share of improvement moral and intellectual. The vain, the vicious, and the mercenary, seldom extend their cares beyond themselves; and the ignorant plebeian, though he may vociferate the word Liberty in a riot, knows not how to give it an effectual support. Alas! what avails empty breath when opposed to a bayonet or a bullet? Nothing but a steady, firm, systematic, and unshaken opposition to the encroachments of those, to whom fortune has given power, and nature an inclination to abuse it, can secure those blessings to our children, for which a Hampden and a Sydney bled. The glorious liberties of an Englishman, such as the right of trial by juries, a participation of the legislature, the freedom of the press, and the privilege of speaking, acting, and thinking, without arbitrary controul, are such as render England, in comparison with some neighbouring nations, a terrestrial paradise; but yet they are advantages too remote to affect the sensual and self-interested, and too complicated to be completely understood, or rationally valued, by a gross and uncultivated understanding.

I venture then to assert, that the writer, who effectually recommends pure morals, manly virtues, and the culture of the intellectual powers, by a liberal and virtuous

tuous education, not only serves the cause of learning, morality, and religion, but effects political good, of a species the most permanent and substantial. His labours tend to advance the members of his society to all the perfection of which humanity is susceptible. He enlightens their understandings, that they may see the great and solid objects of public good; and he emboldens their hearts to pursue it like men—like men, not such as grovel on the earth in modern Greece and modern Italy, in Asia, Africa, and South America, but such as opposed a Xerxes in the straits of Thermopylæ, waged war with a Philip, or put an end to the ambition of a Tarquin and a Cæsar.

The noble love of liberty, which warmed the bosoms of these men, was not the mean offspring of envy and malice; nor of a proud and peevish opposition to the ruling powers, whatever they might be; but it was acquired in the schools of rigid discipline and sublime philosophy. It was accompanied with singular gravity of manners, and dignity of sentiment. Now let us suppose a nation, in which those, who have most influence in its government, are become, through a general and fashionable depravity, gamesters, debauchees, addicted to sordid interest, to luxury, to vanity, to incurring debt without a prospect or an intention to repay: can any thing like the virtue of Leonidas or Brutus subsist in such men? Will they, in an extremity, be ready to sacrifice for the public their estates, their places, their pensions, their expectations, which furnish them with their chief good, selfish gratifications? Will they not rather rejoice to be dependent on a court, which is able to gratify their vanity, supply their pleasures, and reward their meanest submission? Such men, were so improbable an event to take place as the conquest of England by France, would be the first to crouch to the Grand Monarque, and would even rejoice to convert the land of liberty into the land of effeminate pleasure and apish graces.

From the most impartial review of history, and from considerations on the nature of man, I am convinced, that good morals and intellectual improvement are essentially necessary to the existence of civil liberty, and

to the continuance of national prosperity. At a time then, when both liberty and prosperity are endangered, exhortations to virtue, and every excellence, at which an ingenuous nature can aspire, are peculiarly seasonable. They brace the nerves and sinews of the body politic, and enable it to lift the arm with irresistible vigour. They add strength to the foundation of empire, so that the assaults of united nations shall not shake the noble fabric.

In this view, and under these circumstances, I cannot help thinking, that even my lucubrations may be in some measure useful to my countrymen. It has been my invariable object to enlighten their understandings, to exalt and improve their nature, to ascertain and vindicate their rights as men and as members of a society, and to teach them to pay no implicit submission but to truth, reason, law, their conscience, and their God.



END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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